Cultural Relevance, Political Action and Social Movements: The importance of public discourse in the Ecuadorian indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s

A Senior Honors Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation *with research distinction* in Spanish in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University

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April 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been extremely fortunate to receive widespread support as I conducted my research project and wrote my Honors Thesis. Thank you Dr. Fernando Unzueta for agreeing to be my advisor and sponsor my grants to do research abroad after only having met me a few days prior to the beginning this of this endeavor. Your willingness to give me the rewarding experience of conducting research as well as your guidance through the research process and overall support has shifted the course of my academic career and inspired me in inexplicable ways. I would also like to thank Dr. Michelle Wibbelsman and Dr. Kendra McSweeney for agreeing to serve on my committee for my oral examination. You have helped shape the scope of my project tremendously, offered key insights and inspired me with your endless enthusiasm throughout the process. Thank you again to Dr. Wibbelsman for allowing me to use her personal newspaper archives, which inspired me to design this study in this particular way. Additionally, I am grateful to the Arts and Sciences Honors and Scholars Program for their Undergraduate Research Scholarship that funded my fieldwork in Otavalo, Ecuador. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family for their endless encouragements during this adventure.

ABSTRACT

After 500 years of subjugation, indigenous mobilizations in Ecuador in the 1990s and 2000s initiated profound changes in the lives of indigenous peoples nationwide. Inspired by the emphasis placed on cultural frameworks and ethnic identity politics, this study investigates the complex relationship between indigenous cultural relevancy, political action and social movements. This research seeks to study how indigenous culture remained, or became increasingly more relevant through the employment of indigeneity as an umbrella concept used to unite diverse social groups in the indigenous mobilizations. In this case study, I will analyze cultural manifestations, namely periodicals from the time period in order to gauge the use of indigeneity through rhetorical and textual analysis. By means of periodical analysis and a sequencing of political organizing efforts, this study isolates indigenous culture and indigeneity to the extent possible to see how relevancy is maintained in the context of political events within a social movement. Additionally, positive and negative representations of indigenous culture and *indigeneity* will be observed within the articles in order to determine how public discourse and political power lead to material gains for the indigenous movements in Ecuador. By examining each political event through a culturally salient lens, I seek to understand how indigenous culture maintained relevancy during the mobilizations due to the strong foundations of the organizations and movements in ethnic identity politics and indigeneity. Therefore, this study gives context and analysis for indigenous and minority movements worldwide by studying the complex interactions of these variables.

PREFACE

"*Shuk, ishkay, kimsa*," counted my young Ecuadorian students in their native language, Kichwa. Squealing as they began counting in English, their voices floated over the mountains surrounding their school. During my month spent in Otavalo, Ecuador conducting honors thesis research, I enthusiastically sought out opportunities to engage with the local indigenous culture. Volunteering as an English Teacher at an elementary school in an indigenous community offered valuable experiences interacting with multiple generations of Kichwan peoples on a daily basis. Becoming immersed in the indigenous culture and seeing how values and traditions guide their daily lives, I became fascinated with the local presence of the indigenous grassroots organizations that work to protect and advance the interests of the indigenous peoples.

While visiting the headquarters of the local grassroots organization, UNORCAC, or *Union of Peasant and Indigenous Organizations of Cotacachi*, I was inspired by their community projects that they described as "development with identity." Ranging from indigenous tourism organizations to botanical gardens that protected ancestral plant varieties and a center that promoted traditional health initiatives, I was amazed by how their projects benefitted, protected and advanced the community's interests all at once. This experience inspired me to intensively research how culture and politics are intertwined, displayed and mutually authoritative throughout Ecuadorian society. My time spent conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Otavalo was a satisfying and meaningful experience because I was able to witness firsthand the positive outcomes of the indigenous struggle.

Top Left: Josella, one of my students, **Top Right:** Some of my students and I after a *futbol* game, **Middle Left:** Local school in an indigenous community where I taught English, **Middle Right:** A sign in Kichwa describes the indigenous holidays in a classroom, **Bottom Left:** A sign that reads "Bathroom" in both Kichwa and Spanish, **Bottom Right:** sign in front of the Headquarters of UNORCAC

INTRODUCTION

Opening Arguments

In the 21st century, minority and indigenous populations continue to be disenfranchised by their governments worldwide. After years of subjugation in colonial and modern societies, the indigenous peoples of Ecuador united to demand change in the 1990s and 2000s in the most important social movement the country has ever seen. Combatting a colonial paradigm, exclusion from society, ethnocentric land reforms, racism and the denial of political participation, movements such as the indigenous mobilizations in Ecuador are part of a global phenomenon that has allowed minority groups to promote their political objectives and platforms, while maintaining identity (Lawson 1). In the case of the Ecuadorian indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s, the values of the indigenous identity drove the social and political reforms. The mobilizations and indigenous organizations became a cultural manifestation of ethnic autonomy, class redefinition and equal citizenship rights through the process of social and political movements (Escobar and Alvarez 4).

Referring to social movements in terms of collective identities has been a recent trend in understanding social action and movements. Social movements engage not only in political struggle in order to access the mechanisms of power, but also a cultural struggle in search of the affirmation of identity. There is ample debate surrounding which area of social movement theory—structural or cultural—is most effective in analyzing a social movement. Structural theorists focus mainly on the importance of the roles of resources, political structures, organizations and networks. Cultural scholars use the approach of examining cultural frames, identities, meanings and emotions.

According to Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, two sociologists who promote the use of cultural interpretations of social movements, structural theorists overlook the powerful emotional content of ethnic identity and how it drives groups towards action and political development. Ethnicity may be used to mobilize support in order to reach material or cultural gains (Selverston-Scher 21). Within the cultural approach to social movements, a movement can be further framed in terms of the components of injustice, agency and identity. According to William Gamson and Gadi Wolfsted, two sociologists who focus on social movement theory, the injustice component refers to how the situation is politically unscrupulous and incites action, the agency component implies collective action and rallying support to remedy the situation and the identity component unites the "we" against the "they" and shows how collective action stems from identity (qtd. in "'It was like a Fever…'" 139). Each frame of the cultural approach is abundantly apparent in the indigenous mobilizations in Ecuador in the 1990s and 2000s. Class struggle, shifting ideologies and electoral politics were major components of the movement as well, creating a unique mixture of ethnic identity politics and *culturalist* social movement theory.

Political science scholars have also sought to define how ethnic groups engage in political activity and social movements while maintaining their identity. The concept of ethnic identity politics speaks to the "wide range of political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain ethnic groups" (Heyes 1). For the indigenous organizations of Ecuador, their platforms based in ethnic identity politics culminated in two phrases that were vital to the collective achievement of all of their demands: *multiculturalism* and *pluri-nationalism*. In correspondence with identity, *multiculturalism* refers to the question of race, ethnicity and cultural diversity in connection with the government. *Pluri-nationalism* is a concept that demands that a government that is loyal to all its citizens, regardless

of ethnicity or nationality. *Pluri-nationalism* also implies state recognized autonomy for all communities within that nationality, which entails guaranteed collective rights and fulfills the territorial claims of the indigenous peoples. The interaction of power, politics and culture hold overall importance for the indigenous peoples of Ecuador and can be seen throughout the forthcoming literature utilized in this study.

Utilizing a framework of ethnic identity politics and cultural components of social movement theory, it is clear that culture played a pivotal role in the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s. The indigenous organizations and peoples not only demanded participation in the Ecuadorian government, but also called for a *pluri-national* and *multicultural* state that did not compromise their cultural identity. These theories were widely promoted by the indigenous mobilizations and organizations in Ecuador and formed the foundations of their strategies, platforms and motivations. Additionally, it is important to understand and keep in mind that the political and social actors of an ethnic group claim ways of understanding their identity and distinctiveness in order to challenge their oppressors.

Background

The diversity of the Ecuadorian people is staggering, ranging from the rich elite city dwellers, to the poor and illiterate. Indigenous, mixed race and rural populations are greatly affected by high poverty levels and income inequality. Ecuador boasts a population of around 15,650,000 ("Ecuador" 1). The country is divided into three geographically diverse regions: the Pacific Coast, the Sierra Highlands and the Amazonian Basin. The Coast is the epicenter of all exportation for the country and over half of the population resides there. The Sierra Highlands are the base of agriculture for the country. Their production is mostly for local consumption, and

locals pride themselves on continuing to produce culturally traditional livestock and products, such as potatoes, maize and llamas. The majority of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador live in the Highlands. The Amazonian region contains large volumes of petroleum, an important source of the country's wealth. The tropical rainforest in the region was largely untouched by the world outside of indigenous communities until oil companies began drilling in 1967. Modernizations brought roads, colonization, disease, pollution and deforestation.

While Ecuador remains notably more peaceful than neighboring Latin American nations, they have experienced numerous and long periods of political instability. Ecuador has ratified 20 different Constitutions since their independence in 1830 through 2008. Multiple uprisings in Quito lead to the premature ousting of three of Ecuador's last four fairly and democratically elected Presidents. One of Ecuador's most influential leaders, José María Velasco Ibarra, is credited with establishing Populist politics that continue to dictate the governing styles of the country today. Populism emphasizes appealing to the public and empathizing with their struggles. This has lead to the election of many leaders based on their electric personalities and sweeping promises to end poverty in Ecuador, rather than their specific policies to solve economic and social problems (Selverston-Scher 3). Lastly, after achieving full collective citizenship rights in 2008, indigenous communities function under their own legal policies and utilize a certain degree of autonomy. The political environment, geography and demographic characteristics in Ecuador are key to placing the case study of the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s in the complex economic, cultural and political contexts of Ecuadorian society.

OBJECTIVES

Previous Research in the Field

Growing literature documents the ways in which society is organizing in Latin America, offering contextual insights regarding the beginnings and sustainability of social movements, the importance of international support and the weakening of the traditional leftist movements. Additionally, there is substantial research regarding the application of ethnic identity politics and cultural frameworks to social and political movements. This research has been used as a theoretical framework in which to examine specific social movements and political mobilizations among ethnic and minority groups around the world. Specifically regarding the Ecuadorian indigenous mobilizations and social movements of the 1990s and 2000s, there is a large body of literature that has addressed the ideological shift in 1994 that occurred in the indigenous organizations. After affirming the framework of ethnic identity politics throughout the decades of indigenous organizing preceding the mobilizations, indigenous organizations began to seek political power through broader social alliances, while still grounding their strategies in the indigenous identity. The previous research in the field offered critical insights into the characteristics of the social movements in Ecuador, and aided the establishment of my own theoretical framework.

Statement of Research Objectives/Research Questions

With copious examples of research regarding the importance of ethnic identity politics and the appropriateness of using cultural frames to examine social movements, I wanted to further investigate how the role of culture actually played out in the discourses and events of the indigenous mobilizations of Ecuador. Was culture positively or negatively portrayed throughout

the mobilizations? How did political events reflect upon the indigenous identity? What types of phrases were used to represent indigenous culture during political action? How relevant did culture remain to the social movements after the ideological shift towards electoral politics and broader social issues in 1994? In what ways were political events and the indigenous identity reflexively interrelated? My study will examine all of these questions in order to examine the importance of culture throughout the social movements and how that pattern was established.

In order to adequately measure how culture was portrayed and maintained relevancy, it is essential to define the term culture. According to Welsh Marxist academic, Raymond Williams, culture is one of the most complicated words in the English language. In the late 1700s, philosophers began to attack the idea that the development of humanity in civilization and culture was a linear process that leads to the domination of European lifestyles across the globe. Herder argued that culture should be referenced in the plural sense: specific culture of different nations and periods, as well as the variable cultures of social and economic groups within a nation (Williams 89). Williams groups the definitions of culture into three categories:

> (i) The independent and abstract noun, which describes a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development… (ii) the independent noun, whether used generally or specifically, which indicates a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general…(iii) the independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity. This seems often now the most widespread use: culture is music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film (Williams 90).

For Williams, the range and overlapping meanings of culture are the most significant, as seen in the "general human development and a particular way of life, and between both the works and practices of art and intelligence" (Williams 91). For example, in anthropology, culture is related to material production while in history, culture is seen as symbols or common lifestyles. Material and symbolic constructions are always at the root of the definitions of culture, but vary greatly.

As can be seen through Williams' definitions, culture is always relevant through its varying meanings and manifestations in society. This is particularly important to keep in mind while determining how indigenous culture maintains relevancy. In an indigenous social movement, it is crucial to remember that political and social actors of particular ethnicities claim ways of understanding their identity, culture and distinctiveness in order to challenge their oppressors. With the foundations of the indigenous mobilizations rooted in ethnic identity politics, the employment of indigeneity as an umbrella concept was used to unite indigenous peoples and diverse social groups in their struggles. Indigeneity is how indigenous organizations leveraged cultural relevancy and utilized ethnic identity politics. The most widespread approaches to defining indigeneity are those proposed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention no.169 and in the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination of Minorities (1986) by Martinéz Cobo. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs summarizes the two approaches:

> The ILO Convention no. 169 states that a people are considered indigenous either: (a) because they are descendants of those who lived in the area before colonization; or (b) because they have maintained their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions since colonization and the establishment of new states. Furthermore, the ILO Convention 169 says that self-identification is crucial for indigenous peoples…

According to Martinéz Cobo's Report to the UN-Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination of Minorities (1986), indigenous peoples may be identified as follows: "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems." This historical continuity may consist of the continuation, for an extended period reaching into the present, of one or more of the following factors: (1) occupation of ancestral lands, or at least part of them; (2) common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands; (3) culture in general, or in specific manifestations (such as religion, living under a tribal system, membership of an indigenous community, dress, means of livelihood, lifestyle, etc.); (4) Language (whether used as the only language, as mother-tongue, as the habitual means of communication at home or in the family, or as the main, preferred, habitual, general or normal language); (5) Residence in certain parts of the country, or in certain regions of the world; (6) Other relevant factors. Self-identification as indigenous peoples is also regarded as a fundamental element in Martinéz Cobo's working definition: 'On an individual basis, an indigenous person is one who belongs to these indigenous peoples through self-identification as indigenous (group consciousness) and is recognized and accepted by the group as one of its members (acceptance by the group). This preserves

> for these communities the sovereign rights and power to decide who belongs to them, without external interference ("Who are the indigenous peoples?" 1).

I argue that indigenous organizations and peoples leveraged the concept of indigeneity during the mobilizations in order to unite diverse groups and indigenous peoples under their struggle and indigenous culture. The term indigeneity and the phrase 'indigenous culture' are used synonymously throughout the study, but the characteristics of indigeneity are the criteria that were examined throughout the cultural manifestations from the 1990s and 2000s.

Through this research, I will seek to prove how indigenous culture remained relevant in the mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s in Ecuador and to investigate how the framework of ethnic identity politics and the cultural approach to social movements contributed to this. I seek to prove this correlation through qualitatively examining cultural manifestations during the time period that reflect the political events, protests, elections, leaders, marches, strikes, leaders, opinions about the movements and overall characteristics of the social movement at that time. Indigenous culture will be relevant in the articles about political events if the aspects of indigeneity are present, including the attachment to ancestral territories and natural resources, self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group, an indigenous language, the presence of customary social and political institutions and the emphasis on traditional lifestyles based in subsistence production.

Additionally, I will provide context and background information through examining the societal conditions leading up to the movements in order to frame the social movements through a lens of indigeneity and demonstrate the long-standing use of ethnic identity politics. I will also utilize a sequencing of the significant events during the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s

and 2000s in order to easily establish how relevant indigenous culture was throughout the cultural manifestations that reflect the political events of the social movements. Lastly, upon examining the articles in which indigenous culture was relevant during political action, I plan to qualitatively analyze themes of how indigenous culture was portrayed in the manifestations, categorizing the representations as negative or positive.

My research questions are "Did indigenous culture and indigeneity remain relevant throughout the social movements and political events of the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s?" and "Were the articles in which indigenous culture was relevant positive or negative representations of indigeneity? I hypothesize that indigenous culture and indigeneity were relevant to the social movements from the beginning and remained a fluid entity throughout. I hypothesize that indigenous culture remained relevant to the political events and social movements throughout the mobilizations, due to the representations of indigeneity and the strong foundation of the movement in ethnic identity politics that is displayed in the periodicals relating to the sequencing of the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s. I expect to find that indigenous culture and indigeneity were increasingly represented in a positive light and began to take on a central role in the cultural manifestations. The study is significant because it offers key insights into not only the cultural manifestations and political environment of the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s, but it provides context and meaning for minority and indigenous struggles around the world. In order to truly understand the interaction of indigenous culture, ethnic identity politics and social movements, researchers must isolate these variables in different ways and study their interactions.

METHODOLOGY

In my study, I used three specific research methods. The methods include content analysis, a case study approach and archival research. Content analysis and literature review was crucial to establish background information on the indigenous mobilizations, and to track the relevancy of indigenous culture and indigeneity throughout the history of indigenous society and see how it framed the beginnings of the social movement. I used a theoretical framework of ethnic identity politics and a cultural approach for social movements in order to select the literature and peer-reviewed articles. Again, the culturalist approach requires "framing a social movement, its organizations and its agents from a cultural standpoint in order to assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists," stated Francesca Polletta, a professor of Sociology at Columbia University ("'It was like a Fever…'" 138). Keeping the cultural framing components of injustice, identity and agency in mind, I developed a case study in which to apply these theories and collect data on their interactions.

The case study approach allowed me to define parameters for my research and choose materials that aligned with the scope of my study. I chose to study the Ecuadorian indigenous mobilizations specifically between 1990 and 2001 in order to isolate the variable of indigenous culture throughout the social movements. This particular movement was appropriate for my study since the indigenous peoples were working under a framework of ethnic identity politics, but also shifted strategies and ideologies throughout the movement. This would allow me to measure how relevant indigenous culture remained with the employment of indigeneity throughout the organized chaos of a social movement. Most social movements adapt their strategies over time in order to accomplish their demands, making this case study the perfect

opportunity in which to observe the fluidity of indigenous culture. All three cultural framing components of injustice, identity and agency were also present throughout the movements, creating the opportunity to refine my analysis.

For the case study of the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s it is important to recognize that the indigenous organization, CONAIE is the focus of the literature review and case study. This occurred for two main reasons. First, the literature surrounding the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s focuses primarily on the strategies, ideologies and movements of CONAIE. The organization was founded in 1986 and became the most prominent indigenous organization at the national level, gaining power and followers through its ability to unite diverse factors and succeed electorally with their political movement, *Pachakutik*. That leads me to my second point, which is that the majority of the periodical clippings in the archival research focused on CONAIE. Their political events and actions during the social movement were widely reported on. Therefore, it seemed logical that both areas of this research study should focus on CONAIE in order to draw feasible conclusions. Furthermore, indigenous organizations were responsible for leveraging indigeneity in order to unite society and indigenous peoples, so it is important to investigate the actions of the more prominent organization.

However, it is important to keep in mind that numerous local, regional and national organizations vastly contributed to the indigenous movements as well. For the purpose of feasibility and creating a plausible scope for the study, CONAIE was chosen as the focus for this study, seeing as their political and social actions took center stage politically and in the newspapers.

The archival research required careful planning and theoretical framing in order to create a viable study. Measuring cultural relevancy throughout the social movements in correlation with political events required examining CONAIE's strategies and public discourse. While investigating common cultural manifestations and increasing cultural opportunities in social movements, I discovered significant research regarding the effect of media on public discourse. Documents of material culture, including newspapers, books, films, television programs, current fashions and social media are created under certain social, economic and political conditions and offer perception into a society at any given time (Brennen 2). "The cultural approach to communication…understands the communication process as a means of production that is based on the discourse of individuals and groups and is produced within a specific cultural, historical and political context. It is through our use of language that we make meaning and construct our own social realities," states Bonnie Brennen in *Qualitative Methods for Media Studies*.

According to cultural theorist James Carey, ritual views of communication associate the communication process with the public sharing of customs, beliefs, ideas and experiences. This process of creating cultural discourse and rhetoric reinforces and conserves a common culture. For my archival research, I assessed newspapers from this ritual point of view in order to gauge how relevant these cultural ideas and customs remained throughout the social movements. "Assessing a newspaper from a ritual view focuses less on news as information than on news as a dramatic ritual act that invites audience participation. Newspaper readers are thought to join in with the dramatic action to help make sense of their historically based cultural experiences and to socially construct their realities. As with qualitative scholars, from a ritual view readers do not focus on media studies, structures or functions; instead, the use of language in a newspaper provides readers with dramatic and engaging presentations of the world," states Brennen (14).

Additionally, I kept in mind certain concepts that are common among cultural historians while examining the periodical archives. Cultural historians in media studies are challenged to go beyond the reconstructions of the past and to consider people's experiences in culture. This allows connections to be drawn between historical figures, events and issues and the social, political and economic conditions of society (Brennen 95).

Using the ideas regarding cultural history and ritual views of communication, I interpreted the articles using textual and rhetorical analysis in order to understand the particular cultural context of my case study. Textual analysis contends that texts are cultural artifacts and that we can derive meanings regarding a socially constructed reality from them. Researchers can understand this reality through considering words, concepts, ideas, themes, and issues that reside in texts within a particular cultural context. Rhetorical analysis, which examines how speakers and writers use words to influence readers and audience members, was also useful in studying the words that conveyed cultural relevancy in an article.

Using the combined research methodologies from above, I decided to use samplings of newspapers articles from the time period of my case study in order to determine how relevant indigenous culture remained throughout the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s. In order to create parameters for my study, I isolated the variable of indigeneity to the extent possible (looking for references to the attachment to ancestral lands and resources, self-identification and identification by others as a distinct cultural group, an indigenous language, presence of customary social and political institutions and characteristics of indigenous subsistence based lifestyles) within articles that addressed the topics of political events, protests, strikes, marches, elections, leaders, opinions about the movements and overall characteristics of the social movement at that time. Seeing as ethnic identity politics was heavily emphasized, I

chose to limit my study to articles relating to political action in order to judge how relevant culture was in a political context. These articles also focused on the actions of CONAIE and their political movement, *Pachakutik*.

By isolating indigenous culture through indigeneity to the extent possible as a variable in these political contexts, I would examine each article for the presence or absence of indigenous cultural rhetoric, images, themes, words and concepts that were manifested in a specific social and cultural context. I constantly strived to bring out the entire range of cultural meanings of the text in order to place the political events of the social movements in a particular cultural context and gauge the overall relevancy of culture. Additionally, I will rate each article as 1) Demonstrating the overall relevancy of indigenous culture or, 2) Neutral towards the relevancy of indigenous culture. This quantitative analysis allowed me to examine overall trends in my research and support them with statistical findings as well. Furthermore, within the 1) Demonstrating the overall relevancy of culture category, I will further categorize articles as a) positive representations indigeneity and b) negative representations of indigeneity. This will allow me to examine these specific political articles and draw conclusions between the political event and representation of culture.

I utilized the periodical archives of Dr. Michelle Wibbelsman for my research. Dr. Wibbelsman has conducted extensive ethnographic research in Otavalo, Ecuador and collected newspaper clippings during the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s. Her archives include two KIPU books, which are "collections of articles from various publications from the national press of Ecuador that relate to the events of the indigenous peoples' participation in the political, economic, cultural, traditional and artisanal spheres of society," states the website of Abya-Yala Publishers, which is the collections' publisher ("Abya-Yala Publicaciones"1). These

collections were then available for sale from this publisher and served to inform indigenous communities about the indigenous mobilizations and how they were being represented in the press. Additionally, I was able to utilize an anthology of periodical clippings and excerpts that were collected by Dr. Wibbelsman during her field research. The anthology was partially collected from the database of the regional indigenous organization, FICI or the Federation of Indigenous peoples and *Campesinos* of Imbabura, and contains mostly regional newspaper clippings during this time period of February 19, 1999-July, 25, 1999. Additional articles in the anthology were also collected by Dr. Wibbelsman during her field research and are clippings from national newspapers regarding the strikes and the movement's political activities in 1999.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are key to the discussion and understanding of this research. First, the archival research was limited to the collections of Dr. Wibbelsman, due to the fact that this distinct proposal was developed until after I had returned from my trip to Ecuador. While the KIPUs and the Anthology contained more than enough articles that aligned with the key political events of the time, there are still gaps between the sequencing and archival research. This limitation could be remedied with another trip to Ecuador where I could utilize local databases, or with the use of online newspaper databases. The reader should keep this in mind while debating the conclusions from the archival research section.

Secondly, information regarding the political affiliations and levels of readership for each newspaper within the corpus was not easily accessible. This information would be key to determining the accuracy of these findings in regards to representing the public opinions of all Ecuadorians and understanding the political influences of each newspaper. For the *KIPU*s, the

titles of the newspapers were unavailable and the Information regarding the samplings from the anthology was easier to access but still creates limitations since not all newspapers with stories about the political events during the mobilizations were included. Out of the six largest national newspapers in Ecuador, four were included in this study. *El Comercio* is a conservative newspaper that is published in Quito and reflects mostly national news with some regional affiliations. *Hoy* is a centrist newspaper that is also published in Quito and *El Universo* is another centrist newspaper from Guayaquil. Lastly, *La Hora* is left-wing newspaper that is published in Quito and contained many of the articles featuring the indigenous leaders. *El Universo* and *El Comercio* compete for the highest levels of circulation ("World Newspapers and Magazine" 1).

El Comercio boasted a circulation of 130,000 in the early 1990s. *El Universo* had a circulation between 120,000-190,000 on weekdays and 225,000 on Sundays (Hanratty 1). Both newspapers are closely connected with the business communities in their areas as well. Regional newspapers from the Highlands were also included in the samplings of the study as well. These newspapers were mostly affiliated with leftist organizations, but did not have declared ideologies. The circulation levels were much lower and distribution was contained in the region. It is important to keep these limitations in mind while studying how culture maintained relevancy through indigeneity during the indigenous mobilizations because the newspaper corpus that was studied does not include every national or regional newspaper and contains opinions that are influenced by the political affiliations of each newspaper. I argue that the national and regional newspapers included adequately represent a range of cultural manifestations and public discourse in mainstream media that allows me to draw tangible conclusions, despite their limitations.

Thirdly, it should be taken into consideration that while CONAIE was the most nationally prominent indigenous organization; regional divisions persisted throughout the movement.

Previous research shows that CONAIE was unified enough to maintain support, but many ideological differences divided CONAIE from other indigenous organizations and caused controversy. This limits the study due to the fact that the conclusions may not represent the cultural relevancy within all indigenous organizations in Ecuador during this time period.

Lastly, this study is limited in its findings due to the fact that the public discourse discussed is restricted to media discourse in newspapers and does not include other popular cultural manifestations. Multiple additional forms of public discourse and public performances were also important in how culture was maintained during the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s, such as radio broadcasts, television shows, fashion and art. For the sake of creating workable parameters for this study, the research focused on cultural manifestations in media discourse, specifically newspaper articles pertaining to the political events in the movements.

CHAPTER 1
Societal Conditions before the Mobilizations

"It must be pointed out that the various struggles that took place throughout Ecuador's history during its colonial and republican periods were answers to what I call the postponement of our peoples. I am referring to the great uprisings of Tupac Amaru, Fernando Daquilema, and others, leading up to the attempts at structural and historical reforms in the 1990s to give visibility to the indigenous movement in the Ecuadorian state and society and to obtain institutional recognition of the diversity, dignity, and rights of the indigenous peoples."

-Dr. Luis Macas, Former President of CONAIE (qtd. in Selverston-Scher xii)

Introduction

While reexamining and synthesizing previous research regarding historical Ecuadorian society and the beginnings of the indigenous movements, it is imperative to keep the ethnic identity of the Indigenous peoples in mind and how the social movement is framed from a cultural mindset. Culturally inherent values dictate the inner lives of indigenous communities, but also play a critical role in determining the struggles, efforts and achievements of the indigenous movements over time. According to Dr. Luis Macas, former president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (hereafter referred to as CONAIE), several objectives of indigenous culture are paramount in determining all aspects of indigenous life. In the foreword of *Ethnopolitics in Ecuador: Indigenous Rights and the Strengthening of Democracy* by Melina Selverston-Scher, Macas explains the importance of the indigenous identity and cultural objectives in the political uprisings:

> Our peoples maintain their values, knowledge, wisdom, and especially their own cultural, economic, and political institutions against all adversities…Several indigenous institutions of a very diverse nature give our peoples their capacity for organization and social relations as well as their spirituality and intimate connection to mother nature. The *ayllu* (family), *ayllu llakta* (community), *minka* (collective work), *rimanakuy* (the

> practice of dialogue), *yuyarinakuy* (agreements) and *pacha mama* (nature) are vital sources of strength to these communities as they struggle for self-preservation and perfection in the modern world. While the above institutions served as pillars in the construction of indigenous societies, they still stand as supports of the indigenous peoples' agendas to make deep changes in society and to build a state with a truly pluri-national identity (xi).

Building upon the applicability of these cultural values for both the indigenous identity and social movements, Macas articulates how the indigenous peoples incorporated these ideas into the beginnings of organization and political movements leading up to the mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s. As the indigenous populations of Ecuador defined their position on self-awareness and class struggle, they began to utilize these cultural objectives as guidelines for dealing with the societal problems of their time. Establishing a framework of ethnic identity politics, using a cultural approach and reviewing the cultural objectives of the indigenous communities is key in evaluating the societal conditions and political activities before the mobilizations through an ethnographic lens.

The modern indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s would be built upon this political ideology that indigenous peoples deserve political power and citizenship rights while maintaining their indigenous identity. Keeping in mind the accomplishments of the Ecuadorian indigenous movements today, ranging from the institution of a *pluri-national* and *multicultural* state to numerous political achievements, the indigenous populations of Ecuador have had to resist and overcome a multitude of adverse challenges over the past 500 years. European colonization, economic exploitation, exclusion from society, ethnic discrimination and political

subjugation are just a few examples of obstacles facing the indigenous populations of Ecuador over the past five centuries. These factors, as well as a brief history of the social, political and cultural conditions affecting the indigenous populations of Ecuador are key to understanding the broader cultural and political context in which the subsequent movements took place.

It is crucial to note that the indigenous populations were not passive in this subjugation, but have been rebelling consistently for the past 500 years. On the 500-year anniversary of Columbus' "discovery" of Latin America, indigenous protestors celebrated 500 years of resistance to colonial rule and discrimination. CONAIE issued a position paper elaborating on the extensive indigenous resistance throughout Ecuadorian history and how the motivation to rebel and unify preserved their ethnic identity:

> The Indo-American people expressed many forms of resistance to colonial domination…In this manner, the numerous peoples existing in the Americas at the time of its conquest were able to strengthen their commitment to unity while confronting the foreign 'conquistadores.' This understanding of the need for unity has brought about permanent conspiracies and uprisings against colonial regimes, constituting the most definitive expression of the relative autonomy of the indigenous world with respect to colonial society…Our historical consciousness, linguistic and territorial identity, as well as certain aspects of the traditional productive process, rituals and religion, are among the areas remaining intact ("500 Years of Indian Resistance" 1).

Clearly, indigenous resistance and an emphasis on maintaining identity is a centuries old tradition that would continue through movements of this case study and beyond. It is important to not only examine the mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s through the context of the

development of ethnic identity politics, but also through the context of 500 years of rebellion that occurred beforehand.

Paradigm of a Colonial Past

One of the predominant social conditions that lead to the 1990 movement was a paradigm of a colonial past in Ecuador. Beginning with the assassination of the Incan king Atahualpa in 1532, the Andean indigenous culture has been under attack by Western ideals. Religious persecution, systems of economic exploitation, forced labor, strict political networks and violent confrontations were just some of the integral parts of the abusive colonial administration of the 16th century. Racial and socioeconomic stigmas towards the indigenous people continued to develop in the early 17th centuries as well. Portrayed as lazy and passive, the colonial conquerors seized the opportunity to take advantage of the indigenous populations, effectively prescribing them subordinate functions in society for centuries to come. Small scale, localized confrontations occurred in the 18th century, but did not demand wide spread change The paradigm of the colonial past created the framework that would precipitate racism, subjugation of the indigenous identity, exclusionary political structures and the denial of land rights and citizenship rights for centuries to come.

Formation of the Ecuadorian State

Moving into the early 19th century and away from colonial reign, the formation of the Ecuadorian state in 1830 proved to be another elaborate attempt to cover up the ethnic exploitation of the indigenous people. Although many historical systems of exploitation were eliminated, mechanisms of ethnic subjugation outwardly continued. Many indigenous people

were forced to pay excessive revenue taxes, pushing them beyond their means. Moreover, the state maintained a system of intermediaries who were charged with "ethnic administration" and were responsible for "watching over" the indigenous communities, further belittling the capabilities of the indigenous peoples (Yánez and Figueroa 21).

Underlying methods of discrimination occurred as well, ranging from unjust criminal punishments, exploitation of indigenous labor within infrastructure projects, public rejection and contempt of the indigenous culture, and the lack of power granted to the indigenous police authorities (Yánez and Figueroa 23). In addition to the abhorrent practices of the new Ecuadorian government, the constitution of Ecuador in 1830 ignored the rights and existence of the indigenous populations, setting a trend for the years to come. The laws that regulate the economic, social and political aspects of society were based off of a European model that only benefitted the *blanco-mestizo*, or white-mixed-race population, and refused to recognize the indigenous nationalities within Ecuador's borders. For decades, it was understood that in order to participate in governmental activities, a person must assimilate and give up their indigenous identity. Clearly, there was no room for political participation and the indigenous populations were isolated from the political sphere and their own citizenship due to ethnic identity.

1937 Law of Agricultural Communities and Assimilationist Policy

As the decades passed, the Ecuadorian government began to recognize the growing problems relating to the exclusion of indigenous people. "The 1930s was a period of slow and painful capitalist formation in the Ecuadorian highlands. Marginalized indigenous peoples who lived in rural areas particularly felt this economic transition as modernizing elites utilized their control of state structures to extend their power to the remote corners of the republic. It was also

a time of gains in social legislation, including new laws, which dealt with the 'Indian problem,'" states Marc Becker, a professor of Latin American history at Truman State University ("*Comunas* and Indigenous Protest" 534). The 1937 *Ley de Comunas*, or Law of Agricultural Communities, is a prime example of this type of legislation. Since the colonial period, Ecuadorian officials have debated how to "fix" the Indigenous problems of poverty and lack of infrastructure, which had hurt the overall development of Ecuador as a nation. During this time of intense political turmoil in the Ecuadorian government, the Law of Agricultural Communities was seen as a government compromise between dissolving Indigenous communities and simply handing out land to indigenous individuals.

The Law of Agricultural Communities expanded legal recognition to Indigenous communities and allowed the use of legal frameworks and participation in government proceedings. Many Indigenous groups and peoples had been pushed off their land and now forcibly worked on *haciendas*, or large farms. While this law did not change the *huasipungo*, or debt-peonage system, it would allow communities that had been able to maintain ownership of their land to gain formal recognition. The Law of Agricultural Communities required indigenous population centers exceeding fifty inhabitants to unify and register themselves under the jurisdiction of the local government. The *comunas*, or communities would be monitored by overseers, which would allow the government to observe local activities while also engaging communities in the capitalist market ("*Comunas* and Indigenous Protest" 538).

Overall, the politics during this time were overwhelming assimilationist, which is reflected in the language of the Law of Agricultural Communities, which does not recognize local community structures, culture or autonomy. "Páez [Ecuadorian President] hoped that this legislation would help bridge racial divisions and create a harmonious, ethnic-blind society. It

would mediate conflicts between individual and collective interests while providing a path to assimilate isolated Indians into the dominant *mestizo* culture," states Becker, demonstrating how the government was attempting to placate growing indigenous discontent by acknowledging ancestral land rights in indigenous communities ("*Comunas* and Indigenous Protest" 538).

Although this law presents apparent advantages to legal recognition, such as creating a legitimate channel to secure demands from the central government, many indigenous peoples chose not to comply with the law. Geographer Roberto Santana deduces that non-compliance with the law was due to simple unawareness of the law, problems with the paperwork, racial discrimination, or pressure from owners of large *hacienda* farms. Additionally, the indigenous peoples of Ecuador are deeply connected to the *pacha mama*, and many of their traditions, values, sciences and customs are inextricably linked to their natural surroundings. Due to this intense connection between identity and specific territories, many indigenous peoples chose to remain on their plots under the *hacienda* system, rather than leave their ancestral lands (Selverston-Scher 6).

Furthermore, the beginnings of political organization and activism were occurring in many indigenous communities in the rural highlands, which helped local leaders actively resist direct and systematic control by the state. From the budding indigenous movement's point of view, the Law of Agricultural Communities did not address their concerns regarding *campesino,* or peasant quality of life and was only a way for the Ecuadorian government to impose their policies, weaken ancestral communities and assimilate the indigenous identity into the dominant *blanco-mestizo* culture (Selverston-Scher xiv). Local leaders had begun forming alliances with urban leftists, labor leaders and other political organizations that would prove useful in the coming years. Moving beyond the state's offer to organize the indigenous communities, many

alliances and organizations began to form in order to protect the idea of development with identity. On a positive note, the Law of Agricultural Communities did establish the legal recognition of the traditional indigenous community, which is the epicenter of indigenous life and politics. While they were still restricted from their full access to collective rights, these beginnings of communities would become the building blocks of various indigenous grassroots organizations.

Agrarian Land Reform in 1964

After realizing the inherent flaws of the government's previous land distribution plan, indigenous groups decided to look beyond the Law of Agricultural Communities and push for a unique agrarian reform that would better compliment their interests. This early stage of indigenous struggle and organization should be emphasized because it sets the stage for the use of ethnic politics in social movements and mobilizations to come. From a cultural standpoint, one of the main motivations for the indigenous mobilizations was to regain and protect ancestral communal lands. Essentially, the unity achieved in the 1950s and 1960s through the indigenous identity and its implicit objectives created the momentum for the next step in agrarian reform.

The Law of Agrarian Reform was enacted in 1964 and was intended to correct the flaws of in the *hacienda* agrarian structure and improve land distribution so that all stakeholders in Ecuadorian society could the land it more effectively (Yánez and Figueroa 24). In the beginning, CONAIE praised the increased access to land, which the organization refers to as the base of a *multicultural* and *pluri-national* society that supports economic, political and social development. Later, in 1973, the Ecuadorian government enacted further agrarian reform,

intending to implement modern agriculture. Large properties were split up into medium sized farms that supported modern agriculture and small farms that maintained traditional practices. Yet these land cooperatives failed to ease many of the societal pains experienced by the indigenous people of Ecuador: poverty, racism and societal exclusion. Once land was acquired, the struggles to obtain fair prices, credit, prevent inflation and lower taxes in a government-controlled market began.

Overall, the effect of these policies did not result in the increased production of agricultural products or a better quality of life for the agricultural *campesinos* (Yánez and Figueroa 25). Although poverty remained rampant and the agricultural sector was unsatisfied with previous reforms, the biggest take away from this time period in Ecuadorian society was the emergence of local leaders during the agrarian reform movements. Inside of the indigenous communities, many well-known local authorities were given the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding the re-distribution of farmlands and they attempted to make the underwhelming reforms work in the favor of the indigenous people (Yánez and Figueroa 29). On a smaller scale, indigenous peoples had started to become increasingly viable players in non-agricultural economic areas of society. Many indigenous people started to work as public employees and create commercial relationships with the *mestizos*. Additionally, indigenous people saw their artisanal products become more popular and successful in local markets. The accumulation of these small, but substantial successes propagated the possibility of social change and feelings of hope in the indigenous communities.

Oil Boom Creates Economic Strife

Another social and economic condition that is crucial to understanding the political and social climate leading up to the mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s was the petroleum exportation boom that started in Ecuador in 1974-75. Before the oil business expanded in Ecuador, the country was one of the few remaining countries in South America to continue using traditional production techniques and structures. But in 1964, Texaco discovered oil in the *Oriente* region of Ecuador and a process of rapid industrialization followed, which was poorly executed and monitored by the inexperienced Ecuadorian government. Instead, Texaco was allowed to exploit the region as they saw necessary. By 1974, Ecuador was the 2nd-largest oil producer in the world (Santana 13).

The environmental catastrophe that was left in its wake ranged from the pollution of water sources, destruction of the Amazon rainforest and displaced indigenous communities (Santana 14). "Petroleum transformed Ecuador. The wealth it generated fostered modernization, but it also wreaked havoc with the environment and cultures of the indigenous people of the Amazon," stated Allen Gerlach, a Latin American scholar (Gerlach 16). When the decline in petroleum production inevitably arrived, the Ecuadorian government turned to deficit spending and foreign loans in order to subdue protests over the lack of social services, although this only served to worsen the inevitable economic downswing. Governmental policies that allowed the economic and environmental fall out after the oil boom lead to a lower quality of life and exacerbated levels of poverty for the indigenous peoples who reside in the Amazonian regions of Ecuador.

When the period of petrol growth ended in 1983, so did the brief beginnings of the development. Ecuador was left with a stagnant working class that had been pushed deeper into poverty due to the extreme exportation of oil. Public spending had done little to increase basic

welfare and had plummeted the entire country into immense debt. According to Benjamin Keen, a historian specializing in Latin America, unequal terms of trade and neoliberal policies had created economic downturn in the entire region, adding that, "Latin America exported cheap primary goods that suffered from declining demand and prices but had to pay exorbitantly high prices for imported technology, machinery, and other finished products…" (557). Referring to the 1980's in Latin America as a "lost decade", Keen noted exportation's extreme negative effects subsistence based agricultural communities, such as indigenous peoples. The livelihood and identity of the indigenous Ecuadorian populations had once again been threatened, challenging their traditional value placed on ancestral communal lands and their survival in the modern world.

The struggle for land has become one of the most important issues throughout the entire indigenous movement and has defined the ways in which indigenous peoples interpret their identity, autonomy and rights. In the Highlands region, the 1937 Law of Agricultural Communities and 1964 Agrarian Land Reform were unsatisfactory and ethnocentric, leaving many volatile land disputes in its wake. In the Amazonian region, their land struggles were defined by oil and the invasion of multinational corporations and globalization in 1972.

It is important to understand that while attachments to ancestral lands and natural resources are important characteristics of indigeneity, they manifest themselves differently in the Highlands and Amazonian regions. In the Highlands, the conflict came down to the idea that the attainment of land leads to cultural affirmation. Meanwhile in the Amazon, the struggle was based in the need to protect their natural resources from the forces of development and globalization. Indigenous organizations and groups united and reacted differently in both regions, but the ancestral value of land that is a common thread between indigenous identities.

Shifts in Cultural Perceptions of Minority Groups

In addition to the societal conditions and beginnings of indigenous grassroots organizing that lead up to the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s, there was a significant shift in perceptions of the indigenous culture during this time. It is important to not only frame the societal conditions through the lens of ethnic identity politics and culture, but to also examine the cultural public discourse of the past that affected the mobilizations to come. The two main examples of shifting cultural perceptions are the resources provided by international supporters and the increasing impartiality of the academic studies while portraying indigenous cultures.

First, multiple international influences prompted the indigenous people to utilize their skills and mobilize. Around the world, especially in the United States and Europe, there was a growing consciousness surrounding the affirmation of minority rights for marginalized populations in the 1960s (Yánez and Figueroa 34). Moreover, support rallied around the idea that these populations should unify themselves and create change for their communities. In the United States alone, massive cultural and political upheaval occurred in the 1960s, including the Civil Rights movement, antiwar protests, drug culture, women's rights and the sexual revolution. The indigenous community organizations began to take notice that political expression in these instances called the most attention to the problems of the marginalized populations and prompted international attention and support. While legal affirmations of respect for minority groups were still to come, the seed was planted in the minds of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador that they too could mobilize and demand their rights and a role in the political sphere.

Another important factor that lead to the change of consciousness in the indigenous population of Ecuador was the increasingly important role of international humanitarian organizations after World War II. Under the new political platform of CONAIE, representation

became key in order to advance their interests. More and more international NGOs and humanitarian groups began to reach out to the indigenous peoples of Ecuador and offer insights into Western political mobilization tactics. They brought international volunteers with professional experiences to Ecuador. Many of these volunteers taught local leaders about managing their community organizations, gave them different ideas for local development and created a sense of respect for humanitarian values, such as alleviating poverty, development with identity and community unity (Yánez and Figueroa 36). More than anything, these organizations promoted many important international political practices on the ground in Ecuador, including the idea that the indigenous identity could change perceptions of the indigenous communities.

Additional international influences came from the trends of mass migrations occurring in various regions of Ecuador during this time. Whether Ecuadorians immigrated illegally, for merchant purposes, or for entrepreneurial endeavors through transnational organizations/connections, large diaspora communities began popping up from New York City to Spain to Amsterdam in the late 1980s (Kyle 3). Many Ecuadorians migrated from the province of Azuay to New York City and have created networks that help other Ecuadorians and relatives immigrate in order to work and send remittances home. The Otavalo region of Ecuador has created a cross-cultural trade network through their international immigrants, selling ethnic clothing and artisanal handicrafts on several continents. According to David Kyle, a professor of Sociology at UC Davis, the regional migrations shape ethnic identity and affect socioeconomic development patterns. Regarding the indigenous identity, an important phenomenon is that these immigrants maintain their indigenous identities abroad and seek to create local to global connections. Additionally, upon returning home to Ecuador or communicating with family members while abroad, immigrants spread knowledge about human rights, foreign minority

movements and utilize international connections, which was important in shaping the indigenous political movements.

Reversely, tourism became increasingly more common in Ecuador in the 1970s, bringing an influx of international visitors who were interested in indigenous artisanal crafts and culture. For example, the Dutch government and airlines began promoting cheaper flights to Ecuador in 1972 and named Otavalo among one of its top recommended tourist destinations. By 1973, the creation of infrastructure to support tourism had already begun in Otavalo. The Pan-American Highway was paved to improve access from Quito. The Plaza de Ponchos, where the indigenous artisanal market is held also was paved by the Dutch government (Wibbelsman 35). When globalization brought new ideas, tourists and new economic opportunities to Ecuador, immigrants and locals responded by preserving their indigenous customs while using modern means of technology and exposure to international ideas to market their ethnic identity while debunking racial stereotypes.

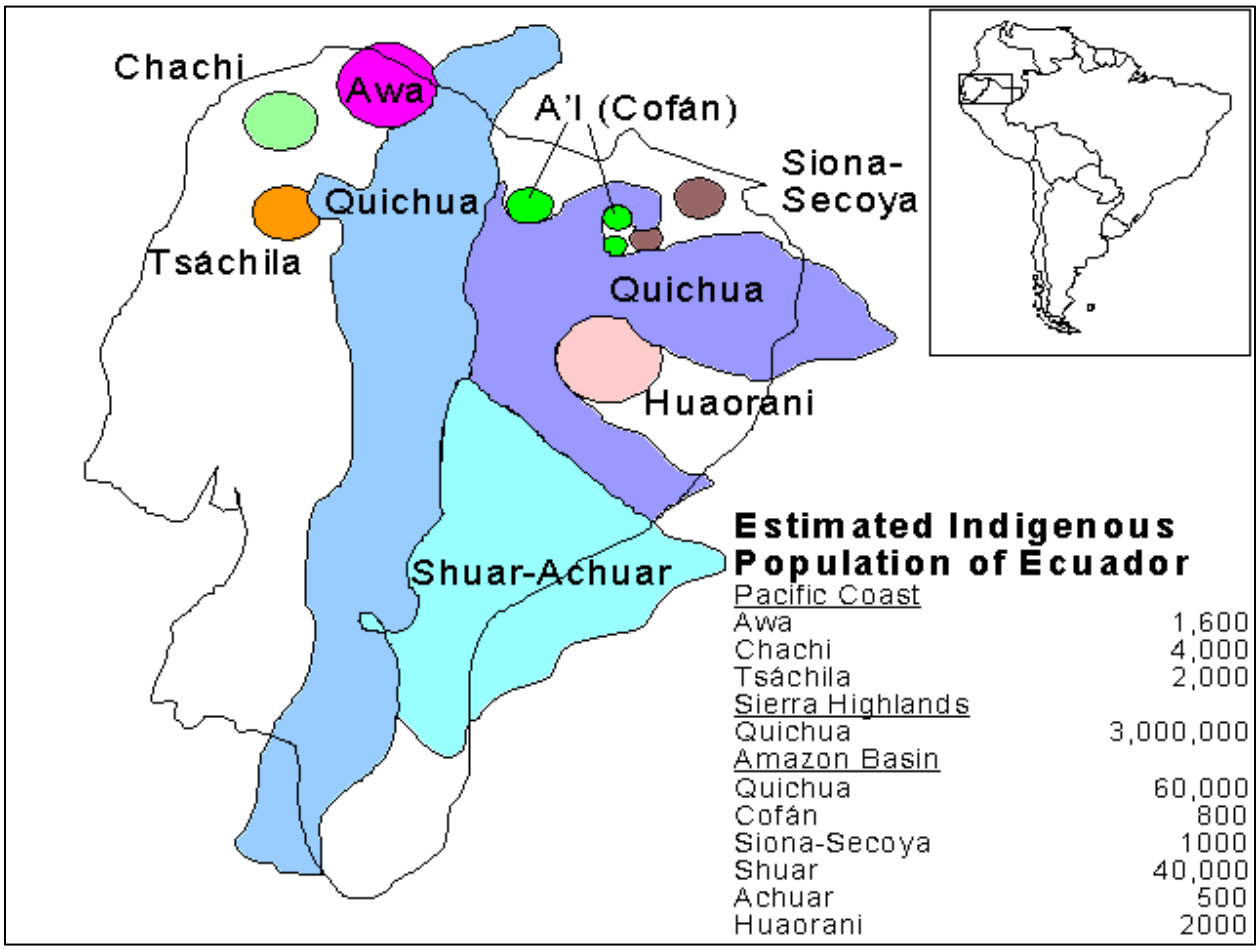
The final shift in cultural perceptions came from a trend of less-biased and diverse academic studies that had a very important role in creating the change in consciousness and in garnishing community support behind the movement to gain political power. These studies and intellectuals were key in articulating the importance of respecting the indigenous culture in Ecuadorian society. Before, academic reports and investigations portrayed the indigenous culture as the rest of the society viewed it: backwards, lazy and inferior. Starting in the 1970s, investigations began to represent indigenous culture in a more positive light (Yánez and Figueroa 39). Using heightened subjectivity and increasingly fair methodologies, the Social Sciences helped create the multiethnic rhetoric that was of upmost importance during the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s. This change of consciousness soon affected all of

academia, and many other areas started to change and represent the indigenous culture with more respect. Theorists began to write about life as a *campesino*, and the political theories behind the agrarian reforms of the 1960s. Incorporating academic studies into the reasoning behind the indigenous movements created an academic support base for the political movements, and showed how the two areas could work together to find solutions to societal problems.

Locality and Diversity of Indigenous Identity

Another pre-condition to the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s that is important to understand is the locality and diversity of the indigenous identity, making it even more impressive that the population was able to organize and come together in these mobilizations. The diverse climate of Ecuador includes the Pacific coastal lowlands, temperate Sierra highlands, Galapagos Islands and the eastern Amazonian basin called the *Oriente*. This landscape reflects the incomparable diversity of the Ecuadorian population.

Regarding the indigenous population, there is ample debate surrounding the exact population number, due to the fact that the criteria used to define such categories is subjective and individual. "Figures range from a low of less than 7 percent in a 2001 census to a high of 40 percent that CONAIE commonly presents. About ten percent of the population is Afro-Ecuadorian… another 10 percent are the white descendants of the European colonists, with the balance of 40 to 70 percent considering themselves to be *mestizos*, or a mixture of the different cultures, a highly contested and fluid category," writes Becker (*Pachakutik* 3). The majorities of indigenous peoples live in the highlands and are categorized under the global classification of "Kichwa" people. Kichwans are part of a larger ethno-linguistic category group of Quechan speakers, which is the largest surviving indigenous language in South America.



Location of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Native Web)

While the previously mentioned generalizations exist regarding the classifications of the Ecuadorian indigenous people, the similarities essentially end there. Profuse regional divisions exist among indigenous groups and remain strong today, despite the mobilizations. Indigenous identity continues to be defined locally, with more than 14 indigenous nationalities stretching from the coast, to the highlands, the Amazon and many pueblos in-between (*Pachakutik* 4). According to Macas, there is a further distinction between pueblo and nationality. 'Pueblo' refers to a specific population with an ancestral relationship, whereas 'nationality' comprises a group of

people who share common customs, cosmology and a way of life. Furthermore, according to Macas, the histories and relationships of the nationalities imply collective rights (*Pachakutik* 5). It was this political language and reasoning that would one day become the basis for organizing the indigenous mobilizations.

Beginnings of Political Grassroots Organizations

After years of combating the combination of a leftover colonial paradigm of exclusion, ethnic subjugation by the Ecuadorian state, unsatisfactory agrarian reform, a debilitating emphasis on oil exportation and total disregard for indigenous culture, the time had come to organize and band together. The frameworks of ethnic identity politics and the culturalist approach to social movements would become the foundation for the movement to come.

The idea of indigenous people banding together as political actors seemed implausible and humorous to many Ecuadorian government elites in the late 1970s. Racial stigmas continued to dictate public perceptions and prevented many indigenous people from voting in elections. Ecuadorians viewed their previous uprisings and organizing tactics as nothing more than the integration and diffusion into modern society through political action (Santana 17). Yet the necessity of a government that took the needs and wants of the indigenous people into consideration was never more obvious than during the 1970s. The government had tried to normalize and assimilate the indigenous culture many times, with various labor and agrarian reforms. Yet the indigenous peoples increasingly wanted to be recognized as a separate identity while being respected within the system (Santana 49). Using political action to protect and promote the indigenous identity was clearly becoming the next step.

A multitude of regional and third-level indigenous organizations were established in the 1970s in Ecuador, although some key organizations had been created as early as the 1940s. Organizations began to form in the Highlands and Amazon regions. The preceding fight for land united the peoples, and they continued to push for the recovery of their ancestral lands as well. While there were many notable indigenous organizations, most were divided among the Amazonian and Highland regions. ECUARUNARI (*Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui*, or Ecuador Indians Awaken), a regional organization from the Andes, played a pivotal role in fighting for territorial rights, as well as defining strategies that related to broader areas of social reform throughout the country (Selverston-Scher xiv). This organization also represents the involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in the Ecuadorian indigenous struggle. The church sponsored the organization's original meeting in 1972, declaring ECUARUNARI an ecclesiastical organization. Over time, this indigenous organization has undergone ideological shifts and now functions as an identity based organization.

Another notable organization that would shape modern discourse regarding indigenous identity, nationality and movements was CONFENIAE, or the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon, which was established in 1980. This group was the first to adopt the shift in language, using the term 'nationalities' to justify their campaign for territorial and political rights (*Pachakutik* 5). Amongst other broad social and development projects, CONFENIAE continues to fight to protect Amazonia from the invasion of foreign oil corporations. This organization's international connections with politicians, human rights groups and environmental activists set a new precedent for international awareness of indigenous issues. The environmental sector is an especially useful ally for the indigenous peoples of Ecuador and

many ecologists have supported the indigenous peoples politically because they see how these communities are the best protectors of the Amazon rainforest.

With the help of their grassroots organizations, indigenous communities began having sustained dialogues in the 1980s regarding self-awareness of their identity, both as a cultural group and socioeconomic class. It was a time of self-rediscovery, which culminated with the creation of *La Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador,* or CONAIE in 1986. Not only did the establishment of CONAIE bring together the 14 nationalities of indigenous peoples in Ecuador, it was the culmintation of the entire organizational process of the indigenous struggle. 500 delegates representing nine indigenous nationalities and 27 indigenous organizations gathered outside of Quito in November 1986, with the intent of forming a pan-indigenous movement that would represent all indigenous nationalities within Ecuador. "CONAIE was the realization of the indigenous peoples' dream of uniting all indigenous people – overcoming all political and religious differences – and at the same time constructing an ideological unity encompassing all indigenous peoples and all social and popular sectors of Ecuador," wrote Macas (qtd. in Selverston-Scher xv). Based on the idea that CONAIE would strengthen and maintain their identity through their social movements, the mission of CONAIE clearly includes conserving their values and traditions in an intercultural society (CONAIE 1).

Initial demands of the organization included land, government funding for economic development, respect for the use of indigenous languages, support for a bilingual intercultural education program and the endorsement of traditional medicine. CONAIE was able to accomplish one goal fairly quickly when the then current President of Ecuador, Rodrigo Borja passed the Directive on Bilingual Education in 1988. The government's promotion and acceptance of an indigenous language, Kichwa, signified changing perceptions towards

indigeneity seeing as one of the characteristics of indigeneity is having an indigenous language that is different than the national language. Not even a decade before, Kichwa was becoming less common due to the fact that the language was so widely stigmatized in public. Another key demand of CONAIE was to reform the Ecuadoran state and Constitution in order to make these demands possible. Although CONAIE sought to coordinate amongst all indigenous organizations of Ecuador, it was nearly impossible to account for all the differing ideologies and cosmologies at the same time (Selverston-Scher 37). Moreover, the needs and platforms of each organization and region differed dramatically as well. The Amazonian organizations were fully focused on staving off the negative effects of globalization and development, while the Highlands organizations sought land recuperation and cultural/societal reaffirmation.

Chapter Conclusions

The preceding general political, economic and cultural background on the Ecuadorian indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s provides context for the following case study and discussion. While examining the political events of the subsequent mobilizations, it is clear that indigenous cultural relevancy and the path towards political power are woven together as tightly as the Andean textiles sold in the artisanal markets of Otavalo. With the ethnic identity of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador in mind, CONAIE (in partnership with numerous regional and local indigenous organizations) would launch a campaign for socioeconomic opportunities and political power that would change Ecuadorian history forever. The role of the indigenous organizations in the mobilizations cannot be emphasized enough, seeing as it was CONAIE and their support network that effectively leveraged indigeneity in order to unite diverse groups behind the movement.

Chapter 1 also demonstrates how the framework of ethnic identity politics developed and framed the indigenous mobilizations through a cultural lens throughout history. Examining the background of the social movements provides context in which to measure cultural relevancy in relation to political events during the mobilizations because it is crucial to understand where the connection of indigenous culture and politics began in order to measure how far it has come. The roots and history of the formation of the indigenous mobilizations heavily guided the modern movement and are therefore relevant. Yet in the 1990s, the concept of indigeneity came to the forefront of the organizing efforts of the indigenous peoples and demonstrated how collective rights could be leveraged and protected in order to accomplish their social and cultural demands. The characteristics of the indigenous culture would now become the basis for the most powerful movement Ecuador had ever seen.

CHAPTER 2:
Case Study: Ecuadorian Indigenous Mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s

Part I: Sequence of Political Events during the Mobilizations

Introduction

The indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s became the strongest and most renowned social and political movement Ecuador had ever experienced. Indigenous movements would be repeatedly launched against governments that made false promises regarding the alleviation of poverty, but simply continued their neoliberal policies. In rapid succession, the indigenous mobilizations demanded bilingual education in the rural indigenous communities, implemented nationwide strikes and protests that immobilized the economy and ousted multiple Presidents. Before the movements, the indigenous peoples were viewed as backwards or feeble, and most importantly, incapable of mobilizing. These perceptions would soon change. While examining the sequencing of the movements, it is paramount to view each event through a cultural lens and within the framework of ethnic identity politics. Simultaneously, it is crucial to observe how identity, injustice and agency affected culture throughout the social movements. I seek to prove that indigenous culture and manifestations of indigeneity remained a fluid, relevant and unifying approach throughout the social movements that guided the political structures, events and strategies of the mobilizations. Additionally, I strive to observe if indigeneity was represented in a positive or negative way by using this sequencing as a reference point.

Time Period 1: 1990-1994: *Levantamiento del Inti Raymi* and other uprisings

On **June 4, 1990** CONAIE facilitated a national uprising that extended across the nation of Ecuador. This mobilization historically occurred right before the June solstice Sun Festival

celebrations, an important festival for the indigenous peoples. It is therefore called the *Levantamiento del Inti Raymi*, or Uprising of the Summer Harvest Festival. The uprising spread rapidly across the entire country, with multiple CONAIE unified organizations joining in the struggle. The protestors blocked roads with trees and boulders and effectively shut down the country for a week. They also occupied the Santo Domingo Cathedral in Quito, which had been a gift from the indigenous peoples and organizations to the government.

These uprisings were a result of CONAIE's frustrations over ineffectual negotiations with the government regarding bilingual education, agrarian reform and adding a clause in support of a *pluri-national* state in the Constitution (*Pachakutik* 30). CONAIE had previously laid out a 16-point platform that contained mainly cultural, political and economic demands, including allowing indigenous control over local affairs and redefining indigenous roles in society. The main demand was that the government needed to step in and address the unresolved land disputes across the country that the agrarian reform institute (IERAC) had been unable to resolve (Selverston-Scher 58). Indigenous communities of Ecuador had been able to unite under the collective banner of indigeneity and begin their quest for political reform.

On **June 8th, 1990** the aggressive and relentless tactics of the indigenous protestors pushed the government to finally negotiate. CONAIE remained firm in their demands for the end of land disputes, institution of bilingual education, economic reforms and the recognition of a *pluri-national* state, but met limited success. Five months later, CONAIE cut off negotiations and would spend the next two years rotating between the negotiating table and occasionally protesting in the streets. Additionally, the movement had seen such widespread support among the indigenous sectors and *campesinos* as well, showing how land and dignity were the unifying objectives of this movement (Selverston-Scher 62). Poverty and political exclusion were constant

societal factors in Ecuadorian life, but in order to create an uprising after centuries of subjugation, it took the compounding failures of agrarian reform that threatened the livelihood and public respect of the indigenous peoples themselves.

Overall, the 1990 *levantamiento* represented the arrival of the indigenous peoples and their movement to the center stage of political life. Academics took note of the ideological framework of identity politics, and how once the indigenous groups were on the national stage they realized how powerful this decade's old framework could be. Another tactic of the movement that came to light during this time period was CONAIE's emphasis on alliances throughout Ecuador, which would be reiterated for years to come. This report entitled "The Present Situation" from CONAIE in December 1992 addressed the need to utilize identity to broaden their base of followers:

> The indigenous movement, with its search for the principles of identity, could serve as a reference point for the rest of Ecuadorian society, since it is a project not only for us, but for everyone. The indigenous problem concerns all Ecuadorians, the government and the governed. Now that there is no political orientation, the struggle for identity, to know who we are, to recuperate our roots-if indeed we have lost them-could provide the way in which we can walk strongly, and firmly into the future ("The Present Situation" 1).

The former President of CONAIE, Cristobal Tapuy called for the unity of all impoverished peoples of Ecuador: Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, *campesin*os and students. They also reached out to labor and peasant unions, churches and human rights organizations. The power of unity was important to CONAIE and they sought out and welcomed alliances with non-Indigenous sectors in order to achieve their demands within the government. This demand for

unity strongly reflects the values of indigeneity, such as the demand for territorial rights, that are applicable to multiple social groups outside of the indigenous ethnicity.

On **July 17 to 23, 1990**, CONAIE joined forces with numerous indigenous organizations to organize the First Continental Conference on Five Hundred Years of Indigenous Resistance in Quito. 400 representatives from 120 indigenous organizations gathered to demand complete structural change in order to achieve their platforms. Autonomy would be the only way to ensure their absolute rights to control their land, education, cultural matters, environmental protections and government systems. Although this march was symbolic and garnished widespread support among the varied indigenous groups, the uprisings in 1990 had little to show for their efforts (*Pachakutik* 34).

Isolated incidences of violence followed the movements as well, as angry landowners murdered three local indigenous leaders over land disputes. The majority of the violence was directed at the indigenous sector, which could be seen in the common graffiti slogan of the period that read "Be a Patriot: Kill an Indian." Furthermore, in order to arbitrate land conflicts, the government sent the military to indigenous communities to provide logistical support and serve as mediators in conflicts, but mostly to support the government's enduring assimilation policies (Selverston-Scher, 48). While violence did not characterize the movements as a whole, the isolated incidents caused the characteristically peaceful indigenous peoples to demand further change.

Clearly, the redefined and evolving role of the indigenous people in society was causing friction and controversy across all groups. While their objectives were still unmet, the overall positive aspect of these political events was that indigenous peoples were no longer excluded from the political landscape and had developed a new confidence in their abilities to mobilize.

Although agrarian reform demands were largely unanswered, the 1990 *levantamiento* showcased the power of indigeneity through the demands for agrarian reform in social movements.

In **August 1990**, the Amazonian Indigenous organization (allied with CONAIE) called the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza, or OPIP, drafted a plan for the government that would grant them complete control of over 90 percent of their land. Two years passed and the government still had not taken any action on the OPIP proposal. The inaction and hostility displayed by the government towards the idea of indigenous land autonomy prompted the *caminata,* or march, from Puyo (in the Amazon) to Quito to make OPIP's case with the central government. Two thousand indigenous peoples of differing nationalities and regions left Puyo on **April 11, 1992** and walked 240 kilometers in 13 days. By the time the *caminata* arrived in Quito, over 10,000 people had joined the march. President Borja agreed to negotiate with the marchers but it became rapidly apparent that he was simply delaying the protestors in lieu of concrete action, citing reasons such as national security as to why the proposal for autonomy was non-negotiable.

On **May 6, 1992**, the marchers threatened to take over the Ministry of Social Welfare building, which prompted the government to accept partial demands from OPIP. The Ecuadorian government conceded over one million hectares of land, which amounted to 65% of their original request. The marchers triumphantly returned home, having proven that collective rights and the value placed on ancestral lands by indigeneity could lead to political success. In subsequent literature, the 1992 *caminata* would be seen as one of the most successful endeavors of the mobilizations.

To protest the quincentenary of the Columbus' "Discovery" of the Americas, many small-scale protests popped up around the country. On **October 12, 1992**, thousands of

indigenous peoples peacefully marched in Quito to celebrate their own quincentenary, the 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance. Although this was a peaceful march, white and *mestizo* elites felt threated by the increasingly organized tactics of the indigenous movements and used their control over the police to deter many people from attending the march.

It was becoming a common theme for indigenous grassroots organizations to create and sustain alliances among broader social groups in **1993-1994**. This change in ideologies speaks to the adaptability of the strategies of the movement. CONAIE called for 'unity in diversity,' in order to facilitate real change in Ecuador. Held in December of 1993, the 4th Congress of CONAIE issued a political declaration stating how their political intentions based in indigeneity seek to reestablish collective political and economic rights for all disenfranchised populations, including indigenous peoples. The Congress wrote:

> The diversity of the indigenous peoples and nationalities, the Afro-Ecuadorian and Hispano-Ecuadorian people, demands their unity in the economic, social, cultural and political fields so as to transform the existing structures and construct the new multinational nation in a context of equality of rights, peace and harmony between nationalities… Unity in diversity will guarantee the construction and consolidation of the Ecuadorian nation, to which the multinational state should give impulse, with the participation and commitment of all nations until economic, political and social development is attained in the context of mutual cooperation, reciprocity and equality ("Political Declaration" 1)

The key concepts of mutual cooperation, reciprocity and equality of indigeneity are seen in the rhetoric of CONAIE. These are central values and practices in the social life and organizations of the indigenous peoples and would serve to unify diverse social groups throughout society. This

use of indigeneity in the social movements demonstrates how the concept was used as a mechanism with which indigenous organizations and peoples could accomplish their demands.

Reflecting the incorporation of class struggle within ethnic identity politics, CONAIE adopted a new *Proyecto Político,* or Political Project, in **1994** that developed two new lines of action in the organization (Selverston-Scher xii). The first realm of strategy remained true to indigeneity and continued to promote the historical, ethnic and cultural demands of the indigenous nation. The second realm of strategy reflected the growing identification among the indigenous communities with the class struggle of the impoverished people of Ecuador. They incorporated shared economic, political and social experiences, stating that, "Undoubtedly, this angle of social class consciousness is a fundamental part of the indigenous agenda, explaining why the indigenous movement has become a catalyst for and embodiment of the indigenous people's demands in general and especially why the movement is pivotal as a social actor for centralizing these demands and voicing the people's collective and global interests," stated Macas (qtd. in Selverston-Scher xii).

For CONAIE, reaching out beyond ethnic identity and using class struggle and social issues to unify larger populations meant gaining widespread support to take on the government. Indigeneity was now officially the umbrella concept that would unite diverse sectors of the economy. Using the cultural approach to social movements, these actions would be seen as framing components in which CONAIE was able to create a feeling of shared injustice and engage new agents in order to advance their mission that was based in identity.

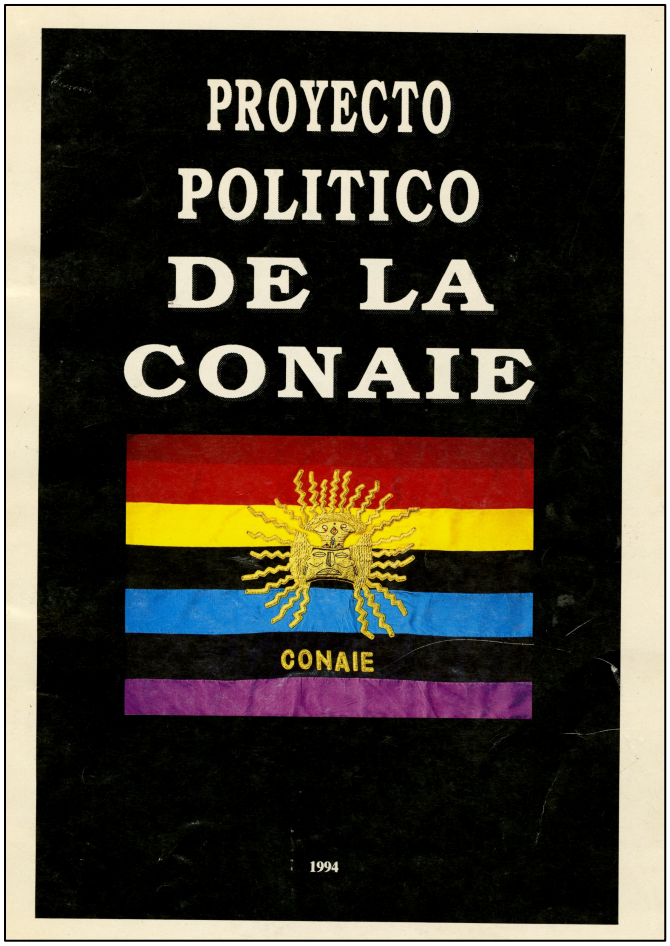


Photo of CONAIE's Political Project Booklet (Courtesy of the archives of Dr. Wibbelsman)

In **June 1994**, the new ideology of the indigenous movement was clearly utilized when the peasant and indigenous forces joined together in the uprisings referred to as *La Movilización Por La Vida,* or Mobilization for Life. Conservative Ecuadorian President Sixto Durán Ballén (1992-1996) proposed new legislation that would allow communal land to be seized and sold by the government, effectively taking away the treasured value of land from the indigenous populations once again.

While this law would end 30 years of unsatisfactory agrarian reform in Ecuador, it would worsen the current situation by allowing the neoliberal government to once again dictate the lives of the indigenous peoples. Seeing as land is one of the key values that sustained and unified the

indigenous grassroots organizations, the indigenous movement did not want agrarian reform to further deteriorate in Ecuador. Organizations of the movement demanded that the government enact true reform, meaning that they should raise wages, provide funds for technical support, finance production demands and create effective gathering places for markets. When Durán Ballén would not listen to the calls for improvement, indigenous activists blocked the roads and effectively shut down Ecuador for days. Ballén declared a state of emergency and threatened to send troops to open the roads. Although the protests were collective and nation wide, Ballém went ahead with the agrarian law. While this was a political setback, the protests proved that strong coalitions could be formed between the indigenous organizations and peasant groups, which would be crucial for the mobilizations to come.

The series of three indigenous uprisings made Ecuador into the Latin American country with the strongest and best organized indigenous movements of the time period. The 1990 *levantamiento*, the 1992 *caminata* and the 1994 *movilización* created valuable experiences, such as bringing attention to agrarian reform, creating rhetoric surrounding the peaceful and united nature of the movements, and the importance of Kichwa, that allowed indigeneity to become prominent in the movement and its framing components. Although the indigenous organizations were able to demonstrate their ability to unify and mobilize, they were still far from achieving the demands of their platforms. Leaders of the indigenous movements had begun to take notice of this trend and pushed for electoral participation.

Time Period 2: 1995-1999: Focus on Electoral Politics

In 1995, the indigenous activists of CONAIE founded the *Pachakutik* Movement for *Plurinational* Unity in order to campaign for political office and promote candidates from the

organizations they represent. It is important to note that *Pachakutik* is not a political party, but an electoral coalition that works with CONAIE and other indigenous organizations to advance the political interests of the movement. According to Marc Becker, a professor of Latin American history at Truman State University, the word *pachakutik* is defined as an Andean concept that signifies a turning point and the beginning of a new era in which whomever was on the bottom, will now be on the top and vice versa (*Indians and Leftists* 166). The ideas of obtaining political power, changing the governing system and claiming the citizenship rights that were long overdue were obvious in the choice of this culturally charged name.

This development emerged after years of debate surrounding how and if indigenous peoples should engage in electoral politics. The debates encompassed the pros and cons of remaining a social movement versus a political movement and the warrants of forming alliances with existing parties who would represent their interests. The founding of *Pachakutik* reversed decades of CONAIE's anti-electoral platforms, which prevented indigenous leaders from running for office and demanded a strict distance from political parties (*Pachakutik* 72). This policy of CONAIE brought to light further regional differences, mainly between the Amazonian and Highlands organizations. CONFENIAE, or the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon, decided to use all the tools at their disposal to oust the political elites, and they created their own political movement in **August 1995**, without consulting CONAIE. This pushed CONAIE to create a separate political movement as well.

The two movements combined in late 1995 to form the joint political movement *Pachakutik*. Seeing as *Pachakutik* emerged from a social movement, their ideologies aligned with the strategic goals of CONAIE and the indigenous movements. The movement promoted the ideals of community, solidarity and respect for all cultures. *Pachakutik* worked closely with

CONAIE and is commonly seen as the political wing of the organization, although it is aligned with multiple left-wing unions and more than fifty rural and urban indigenous organizations throughout Ecuador. Additionally, the new political movement followed the recent trends in shifting ideologies and built upon the demands based in indigeneity by including broader social issues that would better the entire country. After brief tensions regarding the redefinition of their relations with leftist organizations, the indigenous political party was able to define itself around the ideals of a new political orientation that encompassed the ethnic diversity of the country and worked to end neoliberal economic policies that excluded populations in the lower social strata. "We have to unite ourselves as poor people without forgetting that we are indigenous," contended Alberto Andrango, a prominent leader of a local indigenous organization (*Pachakutik* 50). *Pachakutik* offered an opportunity to create intercultural alliances that would lead to political success through unifying the entire population of Ecuador. From a cultural approach, this move redefined agency within the social movement by inciting broader collective action outside of one ethnic identity, but based in indigeneity.

Moving into an electorally focused phase of the indigenous mobilizations, *Pachakutik* made moderate advances in **1996**. Overall, they saw the election of eight deputies (six of which were indigenous) to Congress and two indigenous mayors. In the province of Imbabura, indigenous economist Auki Tituaña won the mayoral election in Cotacachi, where Andrango had served on City Council. Most remarkably, CONAIE leader Macas won a post as a national congressional deputy and became the first indigenous person to hold a nationally elected position (*Pachakutik* 52). Many of the victories were due to the combination of the indigenous votes with the votes of progressive *mestizos* and left-wing sectors. With abundant success at the local level and the promise of more to come nationally, *Pachakutik* debated presenting a candidate for the

presidency of Ecuador. The idea was tabled in favor of sustaining their alliances with larger political parties, seeing as racism was still dominant in society and greatly affected the confidence of the indigenous communities.

Over the next few years, *Pachakutik* continued to promote their electoral candidates locally and regionally while supporting presidential candidates from different parties that aligned with their interests. Candidates often sought indigenous allies, asking CONAIE and other indigenous organizations for letters of support in order to garnish indigenous votes. Despite CONAIE's refusal to offer public support, Abdalá Bucaram, a right wing populist, won the presidential elections in **1996**. Macas resigned his presidency of CONAIE in order to fulfill his post in Congress and Antonio Vargas was elected to fill his spot. CONAIE leaders saw Vargas, who was instrumental in planning the 1992 *caminata*, as the best choice to smooth over divisions within CONAIE that threatened to harm the ten year old movement. Although Bucaram promised to alleviate poverty throughout his campaigns, he continued to push through neoliberal reforms, including radically raising the cost of transportation. Within six months of taking office, Bucaram's unethical economic policies caused a mass uprising that ousted him from office on **February 5, 1997**.

In exchange for their support for the interim President Fabián Alarcón, the indigenous movements had been promised a Constitutional assembly at which they would be able to rewrite the first clause of the Ecuadorian Constitution. Indigenous activists developed a clear proposal for the assembly to rewrite the first article of the Constitution and declare Ecuador to be a *pluri-national* state. This had been a long-standing and persistent objective of CONAIE throughout the movements. *Pachakutik* won seven seats in the assembly and three more through alliances with other parties. They pressed for their momentous constitutional revisions, including the

recognition of indigenous rights. Indigenous peoples celebrated a partial victory in **1998** when the first article of the Constitution recognized the "pluricultural and multiethnic" nature of the country. Collective rights were also recognized in a later section, acknowledging that indigenous self-defined nations and Afro-Ecuadorian or Negro groups formed a part of the Ecuadorian state as well (*Pachakutik* 58). While the indigenous representatives were only partially successful in their demands, the accomplishments in 1998 opened up the idea that the ideologies of political structures and institutions could shift and adapt. Additionally, these small advances proved that the indigenous movements were one step closer to fulfilling the characteristics of indigeneity.

The **1998** elections showed further electoral gains for *Pachakutik* on local, regional and national scales. Meanwhile, debate continued regarding the appropriateness of engaging in electoral options. Activists wondered if indigenous elected officials would use their political power to promote the indigenous agenda, or fall into the existing government structures. Out of the preoccupations regarding this subject emerged a revitalized interest in grassroots organizations and social movements.

Time Period 3: 2000-2001: Final Protests and Unity

In the **1998** elections, Jamil Mahuad won the Presidential race. Debates once again raged within *Pachakutik* regarding whether or not to put forth a candidate for election or to support another party. After deciding to ally with a candidate from another party, *Pachakutik* was disappointed when many rural indigenous voters chose not to vote at all or supported a different candidate, but greater challenges were yet to come. Mahuad gained power in a time of social turmoil in Ecuador. Inflation soared as the Ecuadorian *sucre* devalued rapidly, along with dropping oil prices. Recent El Niño storms had destroyed export infrastructure and markets on

the Pacific Coast. To top it off, a series of banks collapsed and Mahuad responded by freezing personal accounts in order to stabilize the banks.

These neoliberal policies lead to a series of protests against the government in order to address the lack of social services. A strike throughout the country on **March 17, 1999** caused the President to back off slightly. CONAIE pushed further and initiated a second strike in **July 1999** in response the President's proposal to raise the price of gas (*Pachakutik* 67). Yet the biggest protest was yet to come. Mahuad announced plans to dollarize the economy on **January 9, 2000**, raising protests from every sector of society. Indigenous peoples, peasants, poor urban workers and middle class *mestizos* feared that dollarization would only worsen their quality of life, not to mention the sacrifice of economic sovereignty.

On **January 21, 2000**, indigenous leaders and low-ranking military officials ousted Mahuad from power, carrying out the last military coup of the 20th century in Latin America. Unifying over concerns for the national economy, thousands of indigenous protestors met military officials in Quito and took over the legislative building, creating the *Parlamento de los Pueblos*, or the People's Parliament. An important condition to note is that most of the lower ranking military members who began the coup were also members of the lower class and shared many socioeconomic problems with *campesinos* and indigenous peoples. CONAIE President Antonio Vargas, military Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez and former Supreme Court Judge Carlos Solórzano formed a triumvirate government that represented the Indigenous peoples, military and the law of Ecuador. Although power was quickly handed over to Vice-President Noboa, the triumvirate showed how the government and indigenous peoples could come together through mutual interests and respect.

Although CONAIE had been part of the military coup, they still promoted their peaceful platform, commonly known as the *lucha de armas de razón*, or the struggle of armed reason. Vargas emphasized that protests, strikes, peaceful mobilizations and alliances would help CONAIE navigate working within the world of political parties. While keeping their ethnic identity in mind as the underlying reason that the entire movement had emerged, the involvement of CONAIE and the indigenous peoples in the coup proved that they were not simply a social movement with electoral potential, but a political actor with the ability to promote unified action. CONAIE had been able to take advantage of a situation of injustice in order to achieve a larger following.

May 21, 2000 saw the election of more *Pachakutik* candidates than any previous election. They won five provincial positions and 19 municipal governments. Tituaña won reelection in Cotacachi and Mario Conejo became major of Otavalo, both in the province of Imbabura. While excelling in both areas of mass action and electoral politics, the movement still needed to fulfill their demands on a larger scale. Growing pains ensued as the organization balanced the demands from the social movement with demands from their constituents, such as a call for immediate economic relief and dismay over a national scandal regarding election falsification that lead to heavy critiques of Vargas' unilateral decisions (Selverston-Scher 22). Meanwhile, President Noboa passed a series of legislation that lead to the privatization of numerous public services, including telephones, petroleum and electricity. Student groups, labor unions and indigenous organizations held meetings to educate the public about these issues while the feelings of discontent continued to grow. Political parties and electoral politics aside, the indigenous social movement was resurfacing once again, which was CONAIE's area of expertise.

One year after the military coup, masses of indigenous peoples were in the streets of Quito protesting high fuel and cooking oil prices and increasingly expensive bus fares, which were caused by Noboa's policies. The protests began in isolated rural areas in January 2001 when indigenous peoples started to blockade roads. Military troops swiftly arrived to break up the protests, using tear gas and guns to clear the highways. Multiple indigenous organizations called for a march to Quito on **January 28, 2001**. When the protestors arrived, they were kicked out of public parks and forced to take shelter in a local university. In a letter appealing to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on **February 5, 2001**, Vargas documented the human rights abuses occurring in front of him, pleading for help:

> The indigenous protests are the result of a whole history of discrimination, abandonment and massive poverty, especially suffered by the indigenous peoples. In recent years, Ecuador has lived through repeated social crisis… The indigenous population represents approximately 40% of the population, but it is in the poorest end of the population… they live on an average of US $2 per day… These people are nationalities but are terribly limited in political participation and representation. Less than 3% of the members of National Congress are indigenous nor is there a single native in the Ministerial Cabinet. The government has decided to respond with violence and repression to these peaceful mobilizations and continues to violate our human rights (Vargas 1).

The government responded to this outcry by cutting off all water, energy and food deliveries and arrested Vargas for inciting further protest. The Catholic Church eventually intervened and convinced both sides to meet for negotiations. The government signed an agreement on **February 7, 2001**, officially ending the 10 day long protests and agreeing to

remedy the neoliberal policies that most effected the impoverished sectors of Ecuador, such as the increased bus fares and the price of fuel and cooking oil.

The protests saw the highest level of military violence and oppression since the early 1970s, leading to the deaths of six innocent protestors. Despite the violent loss of life, the indigenous social movement had not seen this level of unity since the 1990 *levantamiento*. Unfortunately, this support did not last for long. When Noboa's updated policies still failed to end crushing poverty in Ecuador, indigenous organizations began to branch off into different social movements in an attempt to find an new ideology to follow. Despite the unsatisfying outcomes of the 2000 and 2001 uprisings, the past decade of indigenous mobilizations proved that social movements, based in ethnic identity and framed by indigeneity, could create broad alliances and garnish support from various social groups in order to become a viable political actor.

Chapter Conclusions

The movements were centered on the idea that the structure of the nation-state is inherently flawed because it is based off the concept that Ecuador is a one nation-state and not the combination of multiple nationalities. Indigenous peoples and nationalities are excluded from participation and denied recognition under this system. The indigenous movement that stemmed from this idea promoted a new political ideology: ethnic identity politics. This ideology insisted that citizenship rights were inherent since they were separate nationalities working within the state. Furthermore, framing the demands of the social movement with cultural components allowed indigeneity, as well as the injustice and agency components of the social movement to become more salient. This can be seen in the way that the indigenous organizations promoted the

commonalities between their cultural demands within society, including agrarian reform, respect for bilingual education and knowledge of human rights. The preceding sequencing of events demonstrates the politics of the ethnic identity clearly, which leads the study into the research questions. In order to fully study the relevancy of indigenous culture in this case, it is necessary to further examine cultural manifestations from this time period in order to see how indigeneity was utilized in correlation with cultural relevance, political action and social movements.

CHAPTER 3
Case Study: Ecuadorian Indigenous Mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s

Part II. Newspaper Analysis of Cultural Relevancy in Political Clippings

Introduction

In order to determine how culture remained relevant throughout the sequencing of political events from the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s, I will use three samplings of periodicals from the time periods that correspond to the political events and offer rhetorical analysis, discussion of the key themes within the content of the articles and bring out the entire range of potential meanings from a cultural history standpoint. I will determine that these articles display cultural relevancy if they incorporate and discuss the previously discussed characteristics of indigeneity. This analysis will also provide insight into how the articles containing culturally relevant material portrayed indigenous culture in correlation to political events by discussing positive and negative representations.

Table 1: Sequencing of Events during the Mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s and Corresponding Measure of Cultural Relevancy

Political Action/Events	Date	Cultural Representation in Newspaper
Levantamiento del Inti Raymi	**June 4 1990**	
frustrations over unresolved land disputes		
Negotiations begin with President Borja	**June 8 1990**	
CONAIE starts to look into social alliances		

First Continental Conference on Five Hundred Years of Indigenous Resistance	**July 17-23 1990**	
levantamiento signifies the arrival of the indigenous peoples as political actors		
importance of collective identity and alliances in social movements		
Negotiations yield no progress		
OPIP demands control over Amazonian lands	**August of 1990**	
	January of 1991	Agrarian reform recognized as part of culture
		Culture more relevant in Amazonian case
		CONAIE demands viewed as radical
violence continues over land disputes, leads to indigenous murders	**July of 1991**	Fear of violence causes racism in language
***Caminata* leaves Puyo**	**April 11 1992**	
Government concedes 65% of Amazonian lands to OPIP	**May 6 1992**	
Quincentary of Columbus' Discovery of the Americas	**October 12 1992**	
thousands of indigenous protestors peacfully march to Quito		
CONAIE calls for unity in diversity, create further alliances with social groups	**1993-1994**	
CONAIE adopts *Proyecto Político*, redefining ideology	**1994**	
Combines ethnic identity, class struggle and political goals		
***Movilización Por La Vida*, blocked roads to protest harmful agrarian reform**	**June of 1994**	
cultural value of land unites *campesinos* and indigenous peoples		
although unfavorable reforms passed, new unity provides hope		
CONAIE founds *Pachakutik* Movement for Pluri-National Unity	**1995**	
from cultural standpoint, the component of agency in social movement changed		
moved into electoral politics, focused on broader social issues		
***Pachakutik* made moderate electoral**	**1996**	

advances		
Successes attributed to votes of progressive *mestizos* and left-wing sector		
Uprisings oust Bucaram due to his neoliberal policies	**Feb. 5 1997**	
***Pachakutik* members serve on Constitutional Assembly**	**1998**	
Ecuador redefined as a "pluricultural and multiethnic" country		
Collective rights mildly recognized, showed political structures could adapt		
***Pachakutik* elects candidates on the local, regional and national scales**	**Dec. of 1998**	
	January of 1999	
		Articles in Kichwa included
		Pictures and Language in hard news are more culturally sensitive
		Interviews of indigenous leaders create (+) cultural representations
		Neutral portrayal of indigenous peoples in hard news
		Political action no longer an anomaly
Jamil Mahuad elected as President, despite *Pachakutik* coalitions		
Strikes throughout Ecuador to protest Mahuad's neoliberal policies	**March 17 1999**	
Further strikes in response to rising fuel and cooking gas prices	**July of 1999**	
Massive strikes protest Mahuad's proposal to dollarize the economy	**January 9 2000**	
Protests raised from every sector of society, organized by CONAIE		
Military coup and indigenous activists oust Mahuad from power	**January 21 2000**	
Form a triumvirate government that represents peasant/government unity		
CONAIE continues to promote non-violent approach to political power		
Pachakutik celebrates the largest amount of elected officials to date	**May 21 2000**	
Still needed to fulfill demands of their original objectives		

Rural protests block roads in response to President Noboa's economic policy	**January of 2001**	emphasis on peaceful protests
Military responds with violence and tear gas to end protests		importance of CONAIE and leaders
		CONAIE alliances key to (+) cultural representations
Multiple Indigenous organizations plan march to Quito	**January 28 2001**	Uprisings gained lots of media attention
displays unity amongst all organizations that was uncommon		Public discourse connected to violence and inconvenience
		CONAIE has support of public opinion for demands only
Take shelter in a local university to avoid military violence		frustrations over government's Human Rights abuses
highest level of military violence and oppression since 1970s		public aggravated at inconvenience of movements
Vargas appeals to international human rights groups for help	**Feb. 5 2001**	
Negotiations end protests, Government signs agreement	**Feb. 7 2001**	

KIPU 16: January to June 1991

In KIPU 16, ranging from January 1991 to June 1991, there were 57 articles total that related to political events. Of these articles, 32 (or 56%) portrayed indigenous culture as relevant to the social movement. Within the culturally relevant articles, 31% of articles were positive representations of indigenous culture, while 69% were negative representations of indigenous culture. Two themes emerged regarding the representation of indigeneity in connection with the contemporary social issues and political movements of the time period. They are the regional contrasts between the depictions of agrarian reform and the abundant fear of indigenous radicalism and political upheaval.

First, agrarian reform was recognized as being central to the indigenous movement's demands, but was only associated with culture in the Amazonian cases. *KIPU 16* contained multiple articles from July 1991 documenting the Amazonian indigenous group CONFENIAE's

(or the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon) struggles to protect their land from international petroleum companies, citing ecological reasons as well as cultural motivations based in indigeneity, such as the protection of ancestral territory. An article from July 28, 1991 discusses how protecting the territory of the Cofán tribe helps preserve the land through the indigenous social and cultural systems that are geared towards ecological preservation. The article continues to explain how re-drawing territorial lines to placate both the Cofán peoples and petroleum companies would not be a plausible solution, seeing as the histories, myths and visions of the Cofán world are tied to their particular areas of land (*KIPU 16* 175). Not only are the lands of the Cofán peoples referred to as the "Heart of the Amazon" in this article, but the term "nationality" is also used to refer to the indigenous populations residing there, signaling respect for this characteristic of indigeneity.

While land reform was also recognized as a vital concern in the indigenous platform, articles representing the negotiations of CONAIE and the government after the 1990 *levantamiento* did not reflect the same levels of cultural relevancy. Multiple articles describe public opinions on the CONAIE platform. One letter to the editor states that indigenous peoples just need jobs, not ancestral lands (*KIPU 16* 70). Additional periodicals state that the CONAIE platform is a trick to gain more land, using debatable numbers of how many acres of land indigenous peoples possessed to prove their point. Furthermore, rhetoric from officials of the government involved in the negotiations show that they do not fully comprehend the cultural ramifications of agrarian reform. From an article on March 11, 1991, a government official close to the negotiations was quoted saying that "talks could begin once the indigenous leaders ended their social radicalism," clearly not taking into consideration the cultural sensitivity of the subject (*KIPU 16* 27). Perhaps the most telling observation from the research is the fact that the demand

for agrarian reform is referred to as the "*Problema Indígena*," or the "Indigneous Problem" in numerous articles, demonstrating the public feelings of resentment towards the cultural demand for ancestral territories that is intrinsic to indigeneity.

El futuro de los cofanes y la legalización de su territorio

El territorio indígena es un concepto que conjuga la historia milenaria de los pueblos amazónicos con la naturaleza

Por Lucy Ruiz (*)

La reivindicación de territorios o la noción de territorialidad se levanta desde los pueblos indígenas amazónicos hacia el conjunto del movimiento indígena nacional dentro de un proyecto global e integrador donde lo diverso y a la vez unitario juega un rol fundamental. El territorio es mucho más que un medio de producción: es el espacio en el que ese mundo autónomo familiar establece relaciones sociales y de reproducción, a través de la caza, pesca, recolección y agricultura itinerante. El territorio indígena es un concepto que conjuga la historia milenaria de los pueblos amazónicos con el entorno natural que les rodea y que no es externo a ellos sino parte de sí mismos.

Este artículo va dirigido a todos aquellos que reconocen la pluriculturalidad del Estado ecuatoriano y por lo tanto plantean la necesidad de respetar a los pueblos indígenas, cuestión que fundamentalmente pasa por la legalización de sus territorios.

Los cofanes

La nacionalidad Cofán, perteneciente al grupo lingüístico tucano occidental, habitaba desde hace más de quinientos años entre los ríos Aguarico y San Miguel, territorios que formaron parte de la Gobernación de Quijos. Su ubicación corresponde al alto Aguarico, mientras que los sionas-secoyas ocupaban la parte baja. Hoy esto ha cambiado y ocupan diversos lugares del Aguarico en la provincia de Sucumbíos en la región nororiental del Ecuador.

La información de los cronistas, aunque no revela con precisión datos respecto a los cofanes y a su ubicación, permite establecer de manera general y preliminar una población aproximada de 10.000 individuos al momento de la llegada de los españoles.

En la actualidad los cofanes son 800. Este gran decrecimiento demográfico se debe sobre todo a las terribles epidemias que han afectado a la población desde el tiempo de la conquista. Los virus traídos por los españoles, los misioneros del Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, los petroleros, los colonos, etc., fueron una verdadera guerra biológica que acabó con poblaciones enteras en toda la región amazónica.

Esta guerra aún no ha terminado. Hoy toma cuerpo a través del terrible cólera, amenaza que ha traído a la memoria de los cofanes recuerdos de tristes epidemias como la del sarampión, que vino en los años 50 con los misioneros del ILV.

En tiempos pasados la alternativa frente a las epidemias era huir e internarse en la selva; al huir, los pueblos cofanes buscaban nuevos espacios para reproducir la forma de organización tradicional; sin embargo, en el presente esto es más difícil debido al copamiento del espacio como producto de la entrada de petroleras y colonos.

La Texaco Gulf

En 1964, el Estado concedió a la Texaco-Gulf el derecho a explotar petróleo de la región norte de la Amazonia. Como primer paso, la Texaco invirtió recursos en abrir una carretera entre Lago Agrio y

(*) Antropóloga, investigadora del CEDIME.

TERRITORIO DE LOS COFANES

Prov. Sucumbíos

Quito

Nacionalidad: Cofán
Idioma: A'Ingae
Ubicación: Prov. de Sucumbíos, frontera con Colombia
La información de los cronistas permite establecer una población aproximada de 10.000 individuos al momento de la llegada de los españoles. En la actualidad los cofanes son 800.

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El punto de v[illegible] de los hacendados en relación al levantamiento indígena

Poseer la tierra

El movimiento indígenista no es una protesta campesino-patronal, sino el reclamo de un sector del indigenado organizado... al Estado.

17 DE MARZO DE 1991 EL COMERCIO

IGNACIO Pérez Arteta, presidente de la Cámara de Agricultura de la I Zona ha dado a conocer un documento llamado "El levantamiento indígena visto por los hacendados".

En el documento se recogen los criterios que el sector tiene en relación con el movimiento indígena y los pasos que serían necesarios para un enfrentamiento del problema.

Es así como se establece la necesidad de dividir los objetivos del levantamiento en dos aspectos concretos: el uno el político y el otro el clasista o campesino.

El político es el reclamo del sector indígena de un conjunto de reivindicaciones que como sector anhela, y el clasista es aquel reclamo relacionado directamente con el sector agrícola.

Los hacendados ven con especial preocupación el cúmulo de reivindicaciones políticas del sector indígena, ya que, a su juicio, se mezclan exigencias hoy en con otras absurdas.

Lo que sí quedó claro, dicen, es la existencia de un alto de mayor participación en el poder político del país, pese a no sustentarse en bases legales consagradas en la Constitución.

En cuanto a las reivindicaciones sectoriales, el documento manifiesta que comprende y se explica muchos de los planteamientos expuestos en cuanto se relacionan al abandono que han soportado muchos de los sectores comunitarios.

Además, obedecen "a la marginación y al olvido que han sufrido, en aspectos de importancia tales como: educación, salud, infraestructura y discriminación como parte integrante de la sociedad ecuatoriana".

Tales aspectos, deberían ser preocupación del Estado, puesto que no es dable que existan grupos humanos que vivan en condiciones deplorables.

Señalan que no comparten de ninguna manera los planteamientos de índole política que en su criterio no corresponden a una realidad dentro del país.

jando de lado todo lo que de ahí en adelante ha sucedido...", señala el documento.

En base a aquellos argumentos, se dice entonces que la realidad del movimiento indígenista es de carácter eminentemente político, y que no se trata de un movimiento de reivindicación campesino.

No es un reclamo obrero-patronal o campesino asalariado-patronal, sino que es un reclamo de un sector del indigenado organizado en sus comunidades y cooperativas, al país, al Estado ecuatoriano, como producto de una marginación y un abandono injustificado al que le ha tenido sometido el Estado.

Estas razones serían la Ley de Reforma Agraria y el Código del Trabajo, la estatificación de muchos servicios, como el agua, la energía eléctrica y otros, la constante erosión de la tierra y la falta de transferencia de tecnología.

Los hacendados se defienden a favor de que se siga aplicando la Ley de Reforma Agraria, pero aplicada a todos los propietarios, "sean blancos, mestizos o indios o ya se trate de haciendas, parcelas, cooperativas o comunas".

Manifiestan que no se puede aceptar, por constituir un atentado contra el abastecimiento de alimentos, que la tierra sea afectada dentro del proceso de reforma agraria, para luego ser abandonada o que las tierras sean afectadas para inmediatamente ser parcheladas.

Se estima que el potencial agrícola del país es de 8.3 millones de hectáreas y que 5.2 millones de hectáreas estarían en poder de los indígenas y de personas naturales

"Los hacendados, por estas otras razones, no vamos a ceder a presión de entrega de tierras, específicamente en base a las invasiones de las haciendas, y este punto no es negociable en ningún aspecto".

A lo que agrega: "por lo tanto los propietarios usarán todos los medios moral y prácticamente posibles para defender la integridad de sus propiedades que constituyen la forma de vida y que sirve además a la producción de alimentos".

En cuanto a la ocupación de que los hacendados están utilizando grupos paramilitares para defender sus tierras, señalan que por el momento esto no es verdadero.

Pero, en caso de que el gobierno no garantice la seguridad de la propiedad privada, los propietarios se verán obligados a utilizar servicios de protección para defenderse y garantizar la integridad de los predios, lo cual, se dice en el documento, será responsabilidad del propio gobierno y de los líderes y negociantes de las invasiones.

Indígenas sí tienen tierras

En cuanto a los planteamientos concretos de los hacendados, se dice en el documento que se debe avanzar en el conocimiento del problema indígena, en base a estudios y datos que ya existen y que, de no haberlos, habría que obtenerlos.

Es así, que se propone un censo de tierras, un censo de población ganadera y un censo de población rural.

El censo de tierras serviría para conocer a ciencia cierta la tenencia actual, tipo de cultivos, métodos de cultivo, vocación de las tierras, etc.

El censo de población ganadera se justifica porque no se conoce la realidad ganadera ni el número, clases, razas, producción, pues se manejan estadísti-

El censo de población rural debe realizarse definiendo, en primer término, sus características, dentro del total poblacional de campesinos integrado por blancos, negros, mestizos e indios, determinando su número y actividad.

Como el indigenado tiene como piedra fundamental de su movimiento el acceso a la tierra, el censo de tierras definirá exactamente la situación actual; en base a informaciones disponibles, existen muchas y extensas tierras en poder de dicho sector.

Se establece que desde 1964 se han adjudicado a organizaciones indígenas y a personas naturales dentro del proceso de Re-

The two different levels of relevancy towards the indigenous cultural characteristic of protecting land and ancestral resources can be seen in the articles documenting regional land struggle (KIPU 16 72) (KIPU 16 173).

Another theme that was discovered throughout the periodicals in *KIPU 16* was the *mestizo* fear of radicalism, political upheaval, and the chance of violence from the indigenous movements that resulted in the use of racist language in the articles. One clipping described the indigenous protestors of the 1990 *levantamiento* as "screaming indians." An article from February 17, 1991 states, "In a country where racial political disputes still end with guns, many people still fear that violence could start from the gentle and peaceful people of this country" (*KIPU 16* 13). Various articles emphasized the need for peaceful negotiation and spoke of how uncharacteristic the violence was between indigenous leaders and military personnel in the countryside. Although the limited violence was directed towards the indigenous peoples, the

racial language that was employed in the articles used an accusatory tone towards the indigenous peoples, blaming them for causing an upheaval that lead to violence. Clearly, leftover feelings of resentment and fear dictated the elite public and government's ability to interpret current events from a cultural standpoint.

The fact that cultural relevancy differed between regions is an interesting result in this study. Macas repeatedly defends the CONAIE platform in multiple articles from a cultural and social position in *KIPU 16,* promoting bilingual education and the right to live with dignity. CONAIE and the actions of Macas were typically portrayed in a neutral or positive light as well. Culture and ethnic identity were relevant to all of these policies in theory, but overall the Ecuadorian government and *mestizo* populations of Ecuador did not have a strong understanding of the cultural reasoning behind the demands of CONAIE. The racism and misinterpretations can be seen in the language of the periodicals, including references to indigenous peoples as "costumed aborigines," "unsociable and aloof," and "sickly, dirty and cold." These phrases represent racial stereotypes and the widespread discrimination during this time period. I contend that the Amazonian Cofán peoples' struggles to protect their lands were represented in a more culturally relevant way due to the fact that their demands also addressed environmental concerns, which were easier to understand during this time period. This is evident in the context of each article, which cites the negative environmental impacts before the impacts on indigenous culture.

Yet the glimpse of indigeneity manifested in these articles shows that culture was maintaining relevancy in the social movements towards political power in Ecuador. Overall, the fact that 56% of articles addressing political events displayed cultural relevancy, albeit mostly negative, is still significant. Negative cultural representations are still culturally relevant,

especially in correlation with political power, because stereotypes, misunderstandings and acts of discrimination impede access to the political sphere.

KIPU 32: January-June 1999 and Anthology: February 19, 1999-July 25 1999

The anthology and *KIPU 32* cover periodicals from a period in 1999 that corresponds with the protests and strikes regarding the lack of social services and rising gas prices under the Mahuad administration. Overall, in this sampling of periodicals, there were 91 articles total that related to political events. Of these articles, 42 (or 46%) portrayed indigenous culture as relevant to the social movement. Within the culturally relevant articles, 71% of articles were positive representations of indigenous culture, while 29% were negative representations of indigenous culture. Although less than half of the articles from this sampling incorporated elements of indigeneity, the majority of articles that do represent the indigenous culture do so from a positive standpoint. During this time, articles demonstrated an increased use of politically correct language, indicating a stronger correlation between elements of indigeneity, such the continuation of indigenous political and social institutions, and the social movement. Examples include the increased use of the word "indigenous" instead of "indian" and quotes from indigenous leaders speaking about their hopes for the end of discrimination ("Blanca Chancoso" A5). Furthermore, more photos were used in this sampling of periodicals, which allowed for increasingly accurate portrayals of the indigenous identity. Lastly, a respect for the Kichwan language was evident in *KIPU 32*, featuring four articles with Kichwan translations regarding the civic calendars and political events in the social movements (*KIPU 32* 77).

In addition to the increased culturally sensitive language found throughout the articles and accurate portrayals of indigenous peoples in photos, two main themes emerged among the

periodical sampling that provide insights into the social reality of the time. They are the importance of interviews with leaders of the movements in order to demonstrate cultural relevancy and the neutral portrayal of the indigenous *paros*, or strikes, in creating a positive representation of indigenous culture.

The exclusive interviews with indigenous leaders and the articles regarding the motives and goals of the indigenous social movement proved that indigeneity was key in constructing positive public discourse. In an article featuring CONAIE leader Ricardo Ulcuango, readers were able to learn about his thoughts regarding the goal of maintaining a peaceful movement for the indigenous peoples and *campesinos* ("La Conaie intenta una democracia desde abajo" 6A). The article also features a large graphic that illustrates the system of organizations that support CONAIE and *Pachakutik*. In *KIPU 32*, CONAIE was featured as well and praised for their efficient organization and communication among the indigenous communities in an article titled "The Indigenous Strength," (*KIPU 32* 89). At the bottom of the page, a title reads "500 años de resistencia," or 500 years of resistance, which signifies respect for centuries long fight for cultural affirmation of the indigenous peoples.

One of the founders of ECUARUNARI, Blanca Chancoso, was also featured in the sampling. Portrayed as a leader who is fighting for her citizenship rights and the affirmation of cultural institutions, Blanca's interview offers valuable insights into the indigenous movement's ideology. "[Blanca] clarified that the objectives obtained do not just favor indigenous peoples, but all of the country. Indigenous organizations took action because they felt closest to the crisis," states the article entitled "Blanca Chancoso: *una líder con agallas"*, or a leader with guts ("Blanca Chancoso" A5). Chancoso was also quoted describing the importance of leaving aside all egotistical feelings and personal interests in order to create a unified movement and increase

confidence in the leaders throughout society. Chancoso went on to tell her personal story of what it was like to grow up as a poor indigenous woman and how constantly fighting to assert her identity against racism has prepared her to be involved in the indigenous movements now. These interviews offered intimate views into the cultural lives of these leaders, demonstrating how important the indigenous identity was during the movements.

LA HORA ACTUALIDAD DOMINGO, 25 DE JULIO DE 1999 A5

Blanca Chancoso: una líder con agallas

Esta valiente indígena estuvo al frente de la impresionante marcha que realizaron miles de indios la semana pasada hacia Quito.

DURANTE 25 años esta mujer indígena ha participado en las constantes luchas del pueblo indio por reivindicar sus valores y derechos en el país.

A sus 44 años de edad se siente satisfecha por los logros alcanzados junto a su pueblo, que van desde el derecho a una educación hasta sentarse con el Gobierno para exigir cambios y conformar mesas de diálogo.

Ahora está dedicada a las organizaciones de mujeres y lleva adelante un proyecto de salud para vincular la medicina tradicional con la alternativa. Se califica como una mujer muy consecuente pero perseverante a la vez. Cree que la mejor forma de lograr acuerdos es llegando a entendimientos entre las dos partes.

BLANCA DIRIGIÓ LA MARCHA INDÍGENA

Esta mujer estuvo al frente de la gran marcha indígena por encargo de la Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE).

"Evitamos al máximo encuentros con los elementos del orden pero tampoco nos amilanamos ante la violenta represión. Indignó tanto la forma como nos reprimieron que si esa noche no llegábamos a un acuerdo las cosas empeoraban y se esperaba la llegada de miles de indígenas más", comentó Blanca.

Según esta líder, el Gobierno conocía las soluciones alternativas a las medidas duras que adoptó, pero demoró en cambiar porque no quería utilizarlas.

Aclaró que los logros obtenidos no favorecen únicamente a los indios, sino a todo el país, pero explicó que el sector indígena se unió para luchar porque siente más de cerca la crisis.

"Para lograr una marcha como la que realizamos con la participación de más de 20 mil indígenas, hay que dejar de lado cualquier tipo de egoísmos y cualquier interés personal, se busca la forma de protestar y se lo hace", manifestó.

Blanca se siente feliz luego de la protesta porque dice que ahora el Gobierno ya no impone, sino que abre un espacio para trabajar conjuntamente, buscando lo más favorable para todos.

Destacó la importancia de dejar de lado los intereses y el proselitismo político para lograr la unidad y la confianza.

UN TRABAJO SILENCIOSO

Blanca realizó sus estudios en la provincia de Imbabura y obtuvo el título de bachiller en Ciencias de la Educación. Se inició como maestra en una escuela de la comunidad, donde se preocupó por hacer mejoras y desde entonces empezó a asumir los problemas de su gente. "Cómo indígena y como pobre he soportado el racismo, la injusticia social y los abusos en contra de nuestra raza", afirmó.

Una de sus primeras luchas que afrontó fue en contra del abuso y explotación que ejercían las autoridades con los indígenas en su provincia.

En 1972 se creó ECUARUNARI y Blanca fue una de las fundadoras. Esta organización inició la lucha por el respeto a los indígenas, por la educación y la propiedad de las tierras. También fue la fundadora de la Federación Indígena de Imbabura en el año 74. Luego fue Promotora Social del Ministerio de Bienestar Social.

Blanca señala como uno de los primeros logros, el nombramiento de autoridades propias como fue el caso de los tenientes políticos en las parroquias. En 1980 se convoca a una de las primeras marchas grandes que tuvo una importante convocatoria para protestar en contra del Instituto Lingüístico de Verano.

Luego se decide iniciar un proceso de fortalecimiento del movimiento indígena y mantener una relación de solidaridad y alianza con el sector campesino y agrario.

Se forman coordinadoras de movimientos indígenas y empieza un proceso que dura seis años para concluir en el 86 con la constitución de la CONAIE.

En el año 92 asume la dirigencia agraria de su provincia y desde el 94 inicia procesos con las mujeres indígenas, sin desvincularse de las otras organizaciones.

"Todo ese trabajo lo he realizado en forma silenciosa y por eso no he aparecido en las "página amarillas", como les gusta a todos los políticos", concluyó.

BLANCA CHANCOSO es parte de la lista de nuevos líderes que podrían salvar la carencia de cabezas en los movimientos populares y obreros.

Article from the newspaper *La Hora* featuring ECUARUNARI founder, Blanca Chancoso ("Blanca Chancoso" A5).

Additional profiles of key leaders in the *KIPU 32* collection include Luis Maldonado and Nina Pacari. Maldonado, a member of CONAIE and the leader of a local development project was interviewed on his thoughts regarding collective rights and was quoted saying, "We aren't looking for our identity, because we already have it. However, we want to promote it so that everyone else knows about it and respects it," (*KIPU 32* 34). An interview with Nina Pacari, another CONAIE member and Vice President of the National Congress in 1998, gave cultural insights into how indigenous peoples view themselves as separate nationalities, but are unified in their ethnicity. Pacari spoke about the importance of traditional health practices for indigenous

women, development with identity and how she hopes to be a representative for her culture on a national scale (*KIPU 32* 42). Overall, these profiles on the leadership of the indigenous social movements offer key insights into their motivations to continue the fight for power, which are based in the values indigeneity, such as the preservation and development of ethnic identity.

Secondly, this sampling of periodicals contains numerous articles regarding the *paros* and marches to protest Mahuad's neoliberal policies. Overall, the actions of the indigenous movement are portrayed neutrally and without a racist or violent bias towards the indigenous peoples. Multiple articles clearly discuss the history of the indigenous mobilizations, list the demands of CONAIE and cite how the indigenous leaders were always willing to engage in dialogue. Even the closings of the highways are represented neutrally, or even slightly sympathizing with the indigenous peoples. Two articles from different national newspapers in the anthology both address the protests on the highways in the same neutral or sympathetic tone towards the indigenous peoples, and even use the same photo to emphasize the peacefulness of the indigenous peoples and the violence on the side of the military. The article from the anthology contains a picture showing indigenous peoples protesting on the highway peacefully, surrounded by tear gas and barbed wire. The caption asks, "Was is necessary to receive the Indians this way, like undesirable invaders?" ("El azar y sus peligros" 10A).

¿Qué análisis del escenario político realiza el régimen antes de tomar decisiones?

El azar y sus peligros

Parecería que Mahuad confía en la fuerza de la inercia para que los vientos políticos le sean favorables

Por Javier Ponce
Editor jefe

"El presidente está herido" comentó alguien. Y parece que así lo sintieron todos los actores de estos días, con reacciones distintas: los socialcristianos y el PRE buscando construir el rejón de muerte para la próxima semana; los movimientos sociales procurando el diálogo para no caer en una trampa; los choferes con los últimos palos de ciego; la centroizquierda planteándose quizás una nueva alianza con Mahuad, para no entregar los beneficios de las jornadas populares a una confluencia entre socialcristianos y abdalacistas.

Y en el centro: Mahuad, contando con que le favorezca la inercia, luego de una sucesión de errores políticos sustentados, posiblemente, en una ausencia de análisis político en Carondelet, donde parecería que solo se trazan los escenarios que cuajan en la

Análisis HOY

la Iglesia, y no por su propia reflexión de lo ocurrido a lo largo de dos semanas, ilustra la confusión política con la que actúa el régimen y el consecuente alejamiento del presidente de los sectores

ble a los esfuerzos de la jerarquía católica, una intermediación que crea distancia entre Mahuad y la realidad misma.

Mahuad ha abandonado la iniciativa política en manos del azar. Y en el azar, dice la historia ecuatoriana, cosecharon los mejores frutos

que aquello ocurre y en las anteriores, los dirigentes de los pueblos indios, "haciendo de tripas corazón", han acabado sentándose en Carondelet, no para recibir un fondo millonario financiado por el BID y decir "diosolopague" en oro, sino para hablar de política y trazar poli-

de caldear los ánimos para que el saneamiento bancario llegue en medio de un ambiente de incertidumbre, con el presidente herido y en un escenario en el que cualquier cosa puede ocurrir si es necesario hacer fracasar el saneamiento? ¿Será un menjurje entre la vendeta de

¿Era necesario recibirles a los indios así, como a invasores indeseables?

VIERNES, 16 DE JULIO DE 1999

PUERTAS ADENTRO

ígenas llegan en medio de gases

Llegaron por grupos ante las dificultades que tuvieron con las fuerzas del orden. Utilizaron caminos antiguos para acceder al centro de la ciudad.

DE EL medio día de ayer em-
zaron a llegar los indígenas al
rque El Arbolito (punto de
ión), desde el norte y sur del
grupo arribó por diferentes si-
o que la Policía Nacional y el
pidieron su avance.
ases lacrimógenos que utiliza-
rzas del orden para reprimir a
as no les impidieron llegar al
Quito.
isca Jitacama, de 43 años, salió
vecinos de la comunidad de Es-
nbabura, el martes al mediodía.
urante dos días con pocas horas
so.
aminata fue difícil, porque tuvi-
escondernos de la Policía para
s obligaban a regresar. Utilizamos
os para cumplir con el objetivo.
omido, pero estamos aquí", di-
ia.
e ayer y hoy esperan concentrar-
rque El Arbolito unos 25.000 in-
a mayoría que llegaron ayer fue-
es y jóvenes.
ltras que Julio Gualán, dirigente
NAIE, señaló que permanecerán
ad hasta que el Gobierno concre-
ndas de los indígenas.
edido del sector es que el Gobier-
se hacia un modelo económico
ficie a los 12 millones de ecuato-
no solo a un sector, señaló el diri-
la CONAIE.
el Gobierno no puede gobernar,
la Presidencia de la República".

pecto a los ofrecimientos de Jamil
en cadena nacional el miércoles
che, el dirigente de la CONAIE
e son tibias, porque no solucionan
lemas económicos de fondo.
tuercmos hablar directamente con
erno y no con los Ministros", mani-

chazó el dirigente de los indígenas
d de la Fuerza Pública. "Estamos
o una época de dictadura al no per-
s ingresar libremente a Quito".

LA POLICÍA usó abundantes gases lacrimógenos para dispersar a los indígenas que intentaban llegar a Quito.

Dura represión

● PARA LOS grupos que vinieron la represión se intensificó en la tarde a altura de Guamaní y la Villa Flora. Hasta el cierre de esta edición se reportaron por lo menos diez heridos y varias decenas de asfixiados, incluido niños.

Los indígenas protagonizaron una verdadera fiesta a la que se unieron cientos de moradores miembros de la Asociación de Barrios del Sur, que les proporcionaron alimentos, refrescos, medicinas e incluso vestimentas y abrigos.

Sin embargo, ese buen ambiente fue roto por la policía, que usó abundantes gases lacrimógenos para impedir el ingreso de la movilización hacia el centro.

Two articles featuring the same story about indigenous peoples walking to Quito and blocking the highways use the same tone of neutrality towards the political activities of the indigenous peoples, and even display sympathy for them as the government reacts violently. The photo and rhetoric display a rising level of political correctness and an understanding of indigeneity ("El azar y sus peligros" 10A) ("Indígenas llegan en medio de gases" 11).

The second story states how the indigenous peoples were holding a gathering with refreshments and were wearing traditional costumes near the highway, when the "buen ambiente," or good environment, was broken by the tear gas of the police as they tried to keep

them from entering Quito. The journalist also used politically correct language in this article and incorporated several elements of indigeneity, such as the peaceful mentality, traditional costumes and demands of the movement based in indigenous culture ("Indígenas llegan en medio de gases" 11). This movement towards neutrality in the hard news stories showed that hearing political demands and witnessing uprisings from the indigenous peoples was not an anomaly that shocked the press any longer. While this sentiment does not apply to opinion pieces and polls, the trend of increasingly unbiased hard news stories is present. This discursive shift could also be attributed to the increasing growing electoral presence due to the formation of *Pachakutik* in 1994 and several key successes in 1996. This material change through elections is also attributable to the fact that indigenous political events in the newspapers were not an anomaly anymore.

Moreover, the article dedicated a whole paragraph to discussing why non-violence was important for the strikes and the movement as a whole. This trend towards fair reporting on indigenous peoples should not to be overlooked, seeing as the damaging racial rhetoric had only ended less than a decade before. In correlation with the trend of negative cultural portrayals when violence is involved, the opposite had begun to occur in newspapers. Additionally, there was more anti-discrimination discourse in the periodicals as well. On March 21, 1999, an article was published with the headline "3.7 million people are discriminated against in Ecuador," that detailed the plights of indigenous populations, Afro-Ecuadorians and peasants (*KIPU 32* 95). The overall trend of this sampling suggests a massive decrease in racist language used by journalists in articles regarding indigenous political events. While discrimination was still a problem, public discourse was becoming more neutral and was being addressed along the way.

Overall, the anthology and *KIPU 32* sampling demonstrate a trend towards neutrality in reporting, exhibiting a decreased use of stereotypical language, racist cartoons and misunderstandings of the indigenous culture. Whereas the public discourse in 1990 showed that the public didn't understand the levels of racism or where the movement was coming from, there was more of a sense of acceptance towards the fact that the indigenous peoples were political actors. Although indigenous culture was not relevant in the public discourse surrounding political events in this sampling overall, the fact that the majority of the articles that were culturally relevant contained positive representations shows that indigeneity was maintaining relevancy in some shape throughout the movement.

KIPU 36: January 1-February 8, 2001

In the third and final sampling of periodicals, I again examined cultural relevancy and the characteristics of indigeneity in correlation with the political events of the indigenous mobilizations. In this sampling of periodicals there were 145 articles total that related to political events. Of these articles, 79 (or 54%) portrayed indigenous culture as relevant to the social movement. Within the culturally relevant articles, 61% of articles were positive representations of indigeneity, while 39% were negative representations of indigeneity. In the sampling of political articles that demonstrated cultural relevancy, there was an overarching theme that occurred throughout the 2001 uprisings: significant and culturally relevant public discourse surrounded the uprisings, CONAIE and the government during this time. Whether the discourse was a positive or negative representation of indigeneity was dependent upon how frustrated the public felt with the uprisings and the level of violence that was occurring.

CONAIE and their alliances were heavily emphasized and criticized during the 2001 uprising. Through examining the editorials and hard news stories that conveyed cultural relevance in correlation with political events, it became clear that when the uprisings began and weren't affecting many people, public discourse was supportive towards the protestors and interested in their positions. As the days wore on and the violence and inconveniences continued, public discourse became negative, and people grew angry that a minority group was putting the well-being and safety of the entire nation at risk.

In the beginning, Vargas' rhetoric regarding the peaceful nature of the uprising created cautious public interest and support. Multiple articles were published featuring interviews with Macas and Vargas and their alliances, explaining how this display of effective organizational tactics increased their approval ratings, which had fallen in the preceding months. Before the march to Quito on the 28th, CONAIE had offered to unify the different movements and facilitate a larger uprising in an article published on January 18th 2001 (*KIPU 36* 14). They were praised for involving diverse sectors, such as *campesinos*, laborers, students and poor city dwellers in the march and uprising. Not only did they facilitate the march to Quito, but CONAIE was also able to create concrete alliances between other indigenous organizations in order to make the movement successful, displaying the use of the umbrella concept of indigeneity (*KIPU 36* 56). This rhetoric of unity and peaceful uprisings created positive public discourse towards CONAIE, their leaders and ideologies in the beginning of the movement. I argue that this demonstrates cultural relevancy, seeing as positive cultural representations usually lead to the power to mobilize and create political action.

Furthermore, editorials recognized that CONAIE and the uprising had been able to create a place for themselves in the political sphere where structurally, there is no room for indigenous

peoples. “We never understood that the indigenous peoples had a political culture… the structures and systems of politics are products of the colonization: implanted and Eurocentric. In this context, it is obvious why indigenous peoples are forced to be absent from democratic practices,” stated an anonymous editorial writer on January 28, 2001, adding that introducing indigenous values into the modern political world is key instead of assimilating the groups into the current system (*KIPU 36* 46). This quote demonstrates how indigenous culture maintained relevancy because the writer is discussing the importance of recognizing the separate nationalities of the indigenous peoples, which is a key part of indigeneity. At this point in the movement, CONAIE rallied support, spread information about their demands and benefitted from positive representations of indigenous culture in public discourse, but the uprisings would soon see a downswing in cultural representation as the uprising endured.

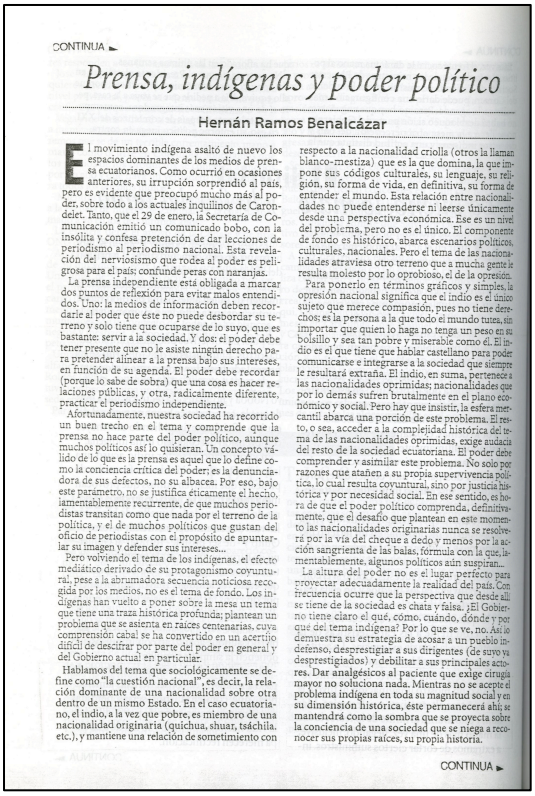
As the march reached Quito and the indigenous peoples took refuge at Polytechnic University of Salesiana (UPS), public discourse started to negatively represent different aspects of the movement. At first, the media berated the government for their unnecessary violence towards the protestors while praising the indigenous peoples for remaining strong. Journalists wrote in detail about the unsanitary conditions for the protestors taking refuge at UPS, and how even without food or basic amenities, they would still perform traditional dances and sing at night (*KIPU 36* 128). The article describes how the protestors continue to carry on their daily activities as best they can at UPS, despite the inconvenient living conditions and their growing restlessness. “At 11:30, while the indigenous leaders are meeting on the second floor of the building, some people dance the *cumbia* in one of the hallways of the university,” states the article (*KIPU 36* 128). Politically correct rhetoric is used to convey the characteristics of

indigeneity in this example, including the cultural custom of dance and the peaceful nature of indigenous peoples.

Multiple articles from this sampling declared that the government was violating basic human rights by allowing people to remain in these unsanitary conditions. Without access to food or water, many protestors and children became ill (*KIPU 36* 142). Editorials blamed the government for refusing to engage in negotiations with the indigenous people while applauding the protestors for continuing their centuries old tradition of peaceful rebellion.

This prompted the government to send warnings to the newspaper, *El Comercio*, stating that they should not write about or publicize the uprisings to that extent. The press answered with an editorial in defense of their impartiality. A journalist, Hernán Ramos Benalcázar, took the defense one step further, explaining the importance of the indigenous movement as a whole:

> The indigenous peoples have brought up a subject that is historically profound. The problem of centuries of racism is based in the actions of today and how the government does not support [indigenous peoples]… We are talking about a matter of nationalities, and in the case of Ecuador, indigenous peoples are members of an original nation that maintains relations with the nation of *blanco-mestizos*, who dominate the cultural codes, languages, religion, quality of life and essentially the way of interpreting the world. This struggle of nationalities cannot only be understood from an economic standpoint, but culturally, historically and politically as well (*KIPU 36* 152).



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Prensa, indígenas y poder político

Hernán Ramos Benalcázar

El movimiento indígena asaltó de nuevo los espacios dominantes de los medios de prensa ecuatorianos. Como ocurrió en ocasiones anteriores, su irrupción sorprendió al país, pero es evidente que preocupó mucho más al poder, sobre todo a los actuales inquilinos de Carondelet. Tanto, que el 29 de enero, la Secretaría de Comunicación emitió un comunicado bobo, con la insólita y confesa pretención de dar lecciones de periodismo al periodismo nacional. Esta revelación del nerviosismo que rodea al poder es peligrosa para el país: confunde peras con naranjas.

La prensa independiente está obligada a marcar dos puntos de reflexión para evitar malos entendidos. Uno: la medios de información deben recordarle al poder que éste no puede desbordar su terreno y solo tiene que ocuparse de lo suyo, que es bastante: servir a la sociedad. Y dos: el poder debe tener presente que no le asiste ningún derecho para pretender alinear a la prensa bajo sus intereses, en función de su agenda. El poder debe recordar (porque lo sabe de sobra) que una cosa es hacer relaciones públicas, y otra, radicalmente diferente, practicar el periodismo independiente.

Afortunadamente, nuestra sociedad ha recorrido un buen trecho en el tema y comprende que la prensa no hace parte del poder político, aunque muchos políticos así lo quisieran. Un concepto válido de lo que es la prensa es aquel que lo define como la conciencia crítica del poder; es la denunciadora de sus defectos, no su albacea. Por eso, bajo este parámetro, no se justifica éticamente el hecho, lamentablemente recurrente, de que muchos periodistas transitan como que nada por el terreno de la política, y el de muchos políticos que gustan del oficio de periodistas con el propósito de apuntarlar su imagen y defender sus intereses...

Pero volviendo el tema de los indígenas, el efecto mediático derivado de su protagonismo coyuntural, pese a la abrumadora secuencia noticiosa recogida por los medios, no es el tema de fondo. Los indígenas han vuelto a poner sobre la mesa un tema que tiene una traza histórica profunda; plantean un problema que se asienta en raíces centenarias, cuya comprensión cabal se ha convertido en un acertijo difícil de descifrar por parte del poder en general y del Gobierno actual en particular.

Hablamos del tema que sociológicamente se define como "la cuestión nacional", es decir, la relación dominante de una nacionalidad sobre otra dentro de un mismo Estado. En el caso ecuatoriano, el indio, a la vez que pobre, es miembro de una nacionalidad originaria (quichua, shuar, tsáchila. etc.), y mantiene una relación de sometimiento con respecto a la nacionalidad criolla (otros la llaman blanco-mestiza) que es la que domina, la que impone sus códigos culturales, su lenguaje, su religión, su forma de vida, en definitiva, su forma de entender el mundo. Esta relación entre nacionalidades no puede entenderse ni leerse únicamente desde una perspectiva económica. Ese es un nivel del problema, pero no es el único. El componente de fondo es histórico, abarca escenarios políticos, culturales, nacionales. Pero el tema de las nacionalidades atraviesa otro terreno que a mucha gente le resulta molesto por lo oprobioso, el de la opresión.

Para ponerlo en términos gráficos y simples, la opresión nacional significa que el indio es el único sujeto que merece compasión, pues no tiene derechos; es la persona a la que todo el mundo tutea, sin importar que quien lo haga no tenga un peso en su bolsillo y sea tan pobre y miserable como él. El indio es el que tiene que hablar castellano para poder comunicarse e integrarse a la sociedad que siempre le resultará extraña. El indio, en suma, pertenece a las nacionalidades oprimidas; nacionalidades que por lo demás sufren brutalmente en el plano económico y social. Pero hay que insistir, la esfera mercantil abarca una porción de este problema. El resto, o sea, acceder a la complejidad histórica del tema de las nacionalidades oprimidas, exige audacia del resto de la sociedad ecuatoriana. El poder debe comprender y asimilar este problema. No solo por razones que atañen a su propia supervivencia política, lo cual resulta coyuntural, sino por justicia histórica y por necesidad social. En ese sentido, es hora de que el poder político comprenda, definitivamente, que el desafío que plantean en este momento las nacionalidades originarias nunca se resolverá por la vía del cheque a dedo y menos por la acción sangrienta de las balas, fórmula con la que, lamentablemente, algunos políticos aún suspiran...

La altura del poder no es el lugar perfecto para proyectar adecuadamente la realidad del país. Con frecuencia ocurre que la perspectiva que desde allí se tiene de la sociedad es chata y falsa. ¿El Gobierno tiene claro el qué, cómo, cuándo, dónde y por qué del tema indígena? Por lo que se ve, no. Así lo demuestra su estrategia de acosar a un pueblo indefenso, desprestigiar a sus dirigentes (de suyo ya desprestigiados) y debilitar a sus principales actores. Dar analgésicos al paciente que exige cirugía mayor no soluciona nada. Mientras no se acepte el problema indígena en toda su magnitud social y en su dimensión histórica, éste permanecerá ahí; se mantendrá como la sombra que se proyecta sobre la conciencia de una sociedad que se niega a reconocer sus propias raíces, su propia historia.

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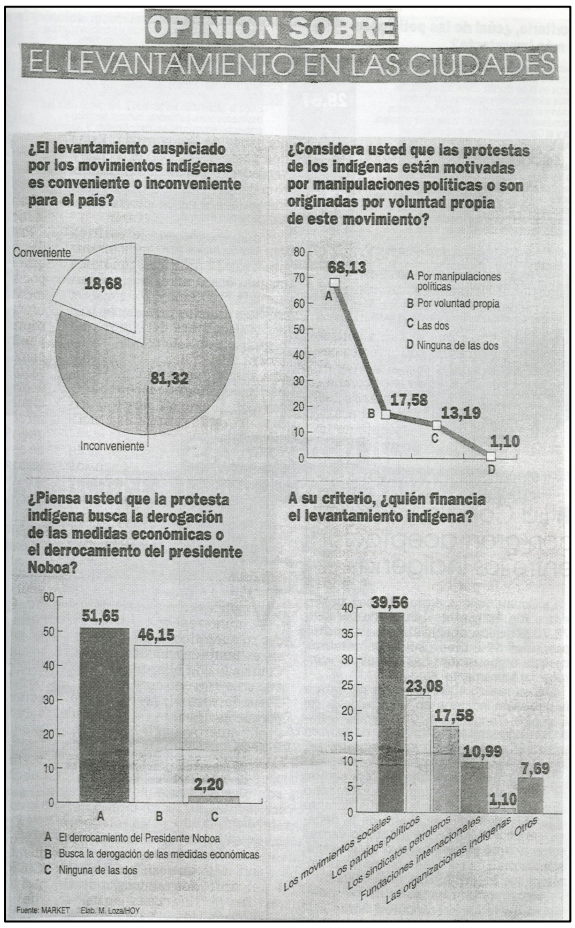
This opinion piece positively reflects the indigenous demand for the restructuring of the government in order to recognize the collective rights of indigenous nations, a key component of indigeneity (KIPU 36

Moving on from the critique of the government, newspapers turned on protestors for causing unnecessary chaos and having a hidden racial agenda. It is important to note that at this time, (February 5, 2001) public opinion polls still showed public support for CONAIE's demands, but also showed that they thought the uprisings were inconvenient and demanded negotiations (*KIPU 36* 237). Grouping CONAIE and their alliances under the term "indio" once more, numerous articles heavily critiqued the movement for being far too radical and not taking the safety of society into account. These accusations of radicalism incited the use of derogatory language in opinion pieces and sometimes hard news stories as well. In one example, the author referred to the indigenous protestors as "ponchos." This is further demonstrated by another poll of the residents of Quito on February 7, 2001, which reported that 81% of city dwellers thought the protests were inconvenient. The poll also reported that 93.5% of indigenous peoples thought that the protest should continue, essentially pitting the two groups against each other (*KIPU 36*

287). The inconveniences of the indigenous mobilizations are connected with a discursive shift towards politically incorrect language and the lack of public support from Quito residents for the uprisings.



Public opinion polls demonstrate the growing unrest with the inconveniences of the movement, leading to negative representations of indigeneity in political articles (*KIPU 36* 287).

Furthermore, a journalist expressed his opinion that a minority group should not be able to demand change that doesn't affect the majority of the population. The writer used an incorrect statistic to represent the indigenous population, stating that there were only 1,800,000 indigenous peoples in Ecuador, when there were actually around 6,200,000 (*KIPU 36* 61). This editorial, along with the other examples, shows how indigenous culture was negatively represented when society felt aggravated by the disturbances of the movement. Felipe Lara, a professor, wrote an editorial that summed up the shift in public discourse. "In the minds of the national society,

indigenous peoples aren't part of politics, and if they appear, it is only to cause chaos and problems… the biggest challenge that Ecuadorian society faces is the capacity to engage in intercultural dialogue," stated Lara in his editorial on February 2, 2001 (*KIPU 36* 181). While hard news stories remained for the most part neutral, there was still the occasional use of the stereotypical term "indio" in certain stories.

The flux of positive and negative representations of indigenous culture throughout these relevant articles can be explained by the changing attitudes towards the movements as expressed in public discourse and public opinion polls. The indigenous organizations did not want to be known simply as troublemakers, but that is exactly the image that dictated their portrayal in public discourse towards the end. Overall, the political articles contained culturally relevant material that was mostly positive representations of *indigeneity*. While there were many highs and lows for the representation of culture during this sampling, the quantitative statistics still suggest that indigenous culture remained relevant throughout the social movements in its various forms.

Table 2: Measuring types of cultural relevancy in Articles with Political Events

	Total number of articles with political events	Articles about political events in which culture was relevant	% of culturally relevant articles	Articles with positive Reps. of culture	Articles with negative Reps. of culture	% of culturally relevant articles with positive reps.	% of culturally relevant articles with negative reps.
Jan-June 1991	57	32	56%	10	22	31%	69%
Jan 1999-July 1999	91	42	46%	30	12	71%	29%
Jan-March 2001	145	79	54%	48	31	61%	39%

Part III: Case Study Analysis, Interpretations and Commentary

Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, the case study concludes that indigenous culture remained relevant to the indigenous social movements over time through various representations of the characteristics of indigeneity and signaled by the overall presence of cultural representations in articles about political action and events. Several trends were discussed from the positive and negative representations of indigenous culture, although all instances of cultural relevancy are significant because they are examples of hindrances to, or opportunities for political power. The trends that affected cultural relevancy include: the representation of CONAIE, demonstrating qualities of indigeneity through various interviews with leaders, and the connection between the political correctness of language and the political actions of the indigenous movements at that particular time.

Overall Trends

First, indigenous culture maintained relevancy through the strategies and ideologies of CONAIE that were portrayed in the newspaper samplings. Ranging from their streamlined rhetoric that constantly reinforced unity among all indigenous groups, to graphics that promoted the demands of CONAIE, to the increasingly prominent dialogue regarding peaceful marches, CONAIE's central role maintained cultural relevancy in the movement. As the movement progressed, the public began to trust the organized events and language of CONAIE and saw how they were building democracy from the bottom up, truly keeping all societal concerns in mind under the banner of indigeneity. The shift in CONAIE ideologies was significant from the sequencing part of the case study, because you could see the positive effects in the public opinion polls that overwhelmingly agreed with CONAIE's demands in 2001.

Using media to mobilize followers is a common use of cultural manifestations in a social movement. According to Gamson and Wolfsted, movements need the media for three reasons: mobilization, validation and scope enlargement. "Movements must reach their constituency in part through some form of public discourse. Public discourse is carried out in various forms, including the movement's own publications and meetings. But media discourse remains indispensable for most movements because most of the people they wish to reach are part of the mass media gallery," stated sociologists Gamson and Wolfsted in their article, "Movements and Media as Interacting Systems" (Gamson and Wolfsted 116). Furthermore, the media spotlight validates the claims of a movement by offering them attention that will in turn influence their oppressors. Lastly, drawing further parties into a conflict through the media will only garnish support to fight the injustice. Broadening their movement to include all social issues, while

maintaining their foundations in indigeneity allowed CONAIE to maintain cultural relevancy while reaching out to new followers and receiving validation.

A second overarching theme from the periodical analysis was that articles interviewing and profiling the indigenous leaders made indigenous culture substantially more relevant by highlighting their ethnic roots. Reading their personal opinions, histories and views on racism and indigenous identity connected the public to their ethnicity and to the social movement as a whole. Additionally, it was in these profile/interview pieces that the study found the largest and most concentrated amounts of culturally positive rhetoric, concepts and language discussed in tandem with social movements and political figures. These interviews placed the indigenous leaders, current events and social movements as a whole in a larger cultural context, making ethnic identity more relevant.

Framing the social movement with an identity component made indigenous culture relevant and rallied followers through dramatic storytelling and creating personal connections. Hearing the first hand account of Blanca Chancoso's childhood of poverty and discrimination made the public empathize with her personal motivations for becoming involved in this movement. Reading about Luis Maldonado's views regarding respect and affirmation for the indigenous identity created understanding among Ecuadorians who had been unable to fully grasp these concepts before. "[Narratives in public discourse] demonstrate our tendency to tell stories to make intelligible what is strange and potentially disturbing. Social movements, by definition, are just that: moments when agency explodes structure, the taken for granted becomes precarious, when old words lose their meaning. Lives are interrupted, physical space is rearranged (think of street demonstrations), the relations of deference and authority and civility that structure everyday life disintegrate…In that context, narratives may serve to contain the

disruptive within a familiar form, to turn the anomalous into the 'new,'" wrote Polletta, describing how cultural frames that utilize identity and narrative create a personal and comforting view of social change ("Contending Stories" 20). I contend that these interviews and profiles of leaders created a greater understanding of indigeneity, demonstrating a key method for maintain cultural relevancy throughout the social movement.

Lastly, the language used in hard news stories and opinion pieces was connected to the political actions of the indigenous movements at the time. If public opinion supported the platform or hardships championed by the movements, less discriminatory language was used. If the uprisings were particularly violent or inconvenient, politically incorrect words and phrases were observed in the samplings. Words such as "indian," "native," or "aborigine," are not the politically correctly terminology for the indigenous peoples of Ecuador. According to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, it is correct to use the name of the specific nationality or the word "indigenous" (*indígena* in Spanish) when referring to a member of the indigenous identity ("Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" 5). The early samplings used "indio" almost every time, and by 2001, newspapers for the most part only used this word in reaction to the violence or incredulity of the indigenous movements. In regards to images, the trajectory of cultural relevance and fair portrayals continued similarly. Images from the earlier samplings in 1991 displayed dirty indigenous children in tattered clothes, only further reinforcing negative stereotypes. By the most recent samplings in 2001, images correctly portrayed cultural dress and neutrally, or even positively, framed pictures of political events of the movements.

This development shows the relevancy of culture because it demonstrates how cultural manifestations, such as newspapers, were beginning to portray the indigenous peoples in an

unprejudiced way, which helped spread the same sentiments to the public. Additionally, it demonstrates that the journalists who were writing the articles were less biased. Gamson and Wolfsted contend that journalists play a critical role in framing an article, even hard news stories. They construct meaning by choosing a particular story line, language and images that inherently support particular frames of mind in society (Gamson and Wolfsted 118).

Overall, cultural relevancy was greatly determined by how the components of injustice, identity and agency were employed throughout the social movement. Negative and positive indigenous cultural representations from culturally relevant articles offered significant insights into the ways in which public discourse shapes views on indigeneity. While not always positive, indigenous culture remained relevant throughout the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s in Ecuador through the manners discussed above.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, indigeneity was a fluid component in the indigenous movement of the 1990s and 2000s. In the beginning of the formation of the movements, ethnic identity brought the indigenous peoples together and allowed them to create a platform that would promote their cultural objectives, which remained the base of their social movement. As time went on and the social movement entered the political realm, creating broader alliances within the society and uniting all groups behind class struggle became the central strategy, although I argue that the movement was still framed by the characteristics of indigeneity. Ethnic identity was invoked and can be seen in the cultural manifestations that were created during these specific political, economic or social contexts. Studying the way that cultural relevancy, political action and social movements interact is key to understanding the way that the indigenous identity evolves in society.

Overall, my study reveals specific trends in public discourse surrounding political action that determine the relevancy of indigenous culture in social movements. Investigating the interactions of multiple, diverse variables and societal phenomena even further demonstrated the complex nature of the indigenous identity and the way in which it is perceived. Indigenous cultural manifestations allow researchers to bring out intrinsic and potential meanings of a text in hopes of better understanding a socially constructed reality. While this study showed the increasing importance and maintained relevance of culture, there were still a great deal of demands left unfulfilled at the end of the mobilizations in 2001. The indigenous social movement and political participation continues today and has made several strides towards their goals. Perhaps the greatest manifestation of indigenous culture was the long awaited Constitutional reform in 2008 that declared that Ecuador is a “constitutional state of rights and

justice, social, democratic, sovereign, independent, unitary, intercultural, *pluri-national* and secular," (*Pachakutik* 143). According to Minority Rights Group International, the adoption of this term in the Constitution also signifies that collective rights will be included in all relevant instruments establishing forms of administration, functions and systems of government for nations and peoples in their own territories. Additionally, the nationalities must be consulted of all plans to extract natural resources from their territory (World Directory of Minorities 1). While there is still considerable progress to be made regarding the original objectives of the CONAIE platform, the indigenous ethnic identity has now been declared relevant in all political and social structures by the Ecuadorian government.

Furthermore, the interrelations of indigeneity, public discourse and political action demonstrated multiple broader concepts in relation to the processes of how the indigenous identity maintained cultural relevancy. Cultural relevancy existed prior to the mobilizations, but this case study demonstrates how public discourse and national discourse make the identity of a nation. National identity is constantly reshaped through cultural processes, such as the government promoting an official identity in school textbooks, or the popular identity seen in cultural manifestations in mass media. Academics Sarah Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood explain this process in their book *Remaking the Nation: Place, Identity and Politics in Latin America* state:

> Mass communication is one part of the story of popular cultures but folkloric elements are also important and again show the complexity of the articulation between the official and the popular…it is probably valid to say that in Latin America, the idea of folklore is bound up with the idea of national identity, and has to be used by the state, among other things, in order to bring about national unity. This provides an interesting

> contradiction in which difference is made malleable in relation to official accounts of the nation and transformed into an under-theorized multiculturalism in support of a 'fictive ethnicity' as the basis of national unity (Radcliffe and Westwood 81).

Popular culture in mass media during a politicized movement can contest the presupposed national identity. Manifestations of indigeneity throughout the movements constructed moments of belonging within the historical and cultural boundaries of the indigenous nationality, reshaping the imagined Ecuadorian nation. The centrality of the claim of indigeneity in measuring how indigenous culture remained relevant can be seen in the discursive shifts in response to injustice, agency and identity.

The lessons learned from studying the interaction of cultural relevancy and political power in indigenous social movements gleaned from this case study in Ecuador should be applicable to understanding social movements and struggles for the advancement of minority group rights in other Latin American countries and globally. Understanding the complex interactions of cultural relevancy, ethnic identity politics and social movements requires further theoretical analysis and different case studies, but is an important lens and framework to utilize while examining social movements worldwide.

For future research, I hope to be able to collect further periodical samplings in order to fill in the gaps between the archives I utilized in this study. Additionally, I would like to investigate the key rebellions during the 500 years of resistance before the indigenous mobilizations of the 1990s and 2000s. An in-depth analysis of the rebellions that were a huge part of the history of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador would allow me to further place this case study in a specific historical and cultural context. Moreover, I would like to look at different

cultural manifestations from different periods to gauge how relevant culture was before and after the indigenous movements. This could include a literature review, including Jorge Icaza's book entitled *Huasipungo*, which is a portrait of an indigenous peasant in the 1930s, and other literature from the early *indigenista* discipline. Again, this would allow me to investigate the background of the mobilizations in further detail and utilize fictional discourse as well in my study. Lastly, I would love to conduct ethnographic research in Ecuador again and collect oral histories and narratives from indigenous peoples who were involved in this extraordinary movement.

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